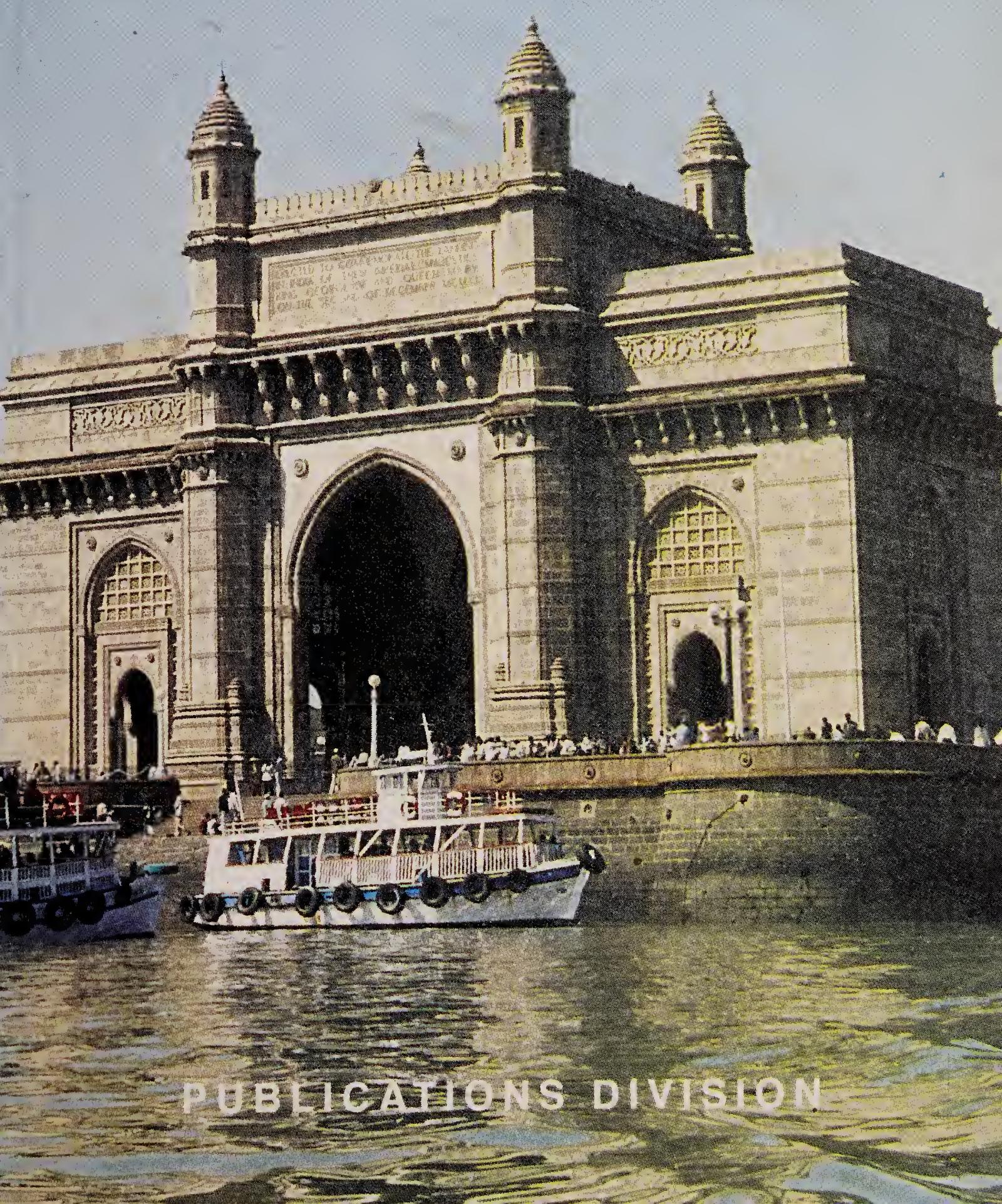


CITIES OF INDIA

# Mumbai

MANOJ KSHIRSAGAR



PUBLICATIONS DIVISION



*Cities of India*

# MUMBAI

Manoj W. Kshirsagar



**PUBLICATIONS DIVISION**  
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## PREFACE

Enriched with diversity and engulfed in typical metropolitan ups and downs, Mumbai, the industrial capital of India, is a maze of its own kind. Its geographical upheavals dating back to five crore years and six hundred years of foreign rule are embedded on its person. No doubt, all the modern day pressures are making this city vulnerable to a number of incurable ills. Still the exodus of fortune seekers and makers to this fascinating city since time unmemorable is a testimony in itself. Mumbai is lavish, luxurious, glamorous, fascinating and it is also bad, ugly and deceptive. It is the gateway of India. Wherein, when one enters forever becomes a 'Mumbaikar'.

I hope the book will prompt you to explore and seek more out of this city.

September, 2002, Nagpur

Manoj Kshirsagar



## ABOUT THE SERIES

Our series CITIES OF INDIA is not meant to be a demographic account, nor a geographic description of the place. This is neither a comprehensive study of the city, nor an exhaustive report, nor a complete guidebook. Yet, the effort is to tell as much about a city as to make a casual traveller not lost in an alien place. It is also possible that the very residents of the city – some for generations – may discover something new or fascinating that they had been unaware of so far. Should any of these objectives be achieved even in a moderate way, we would consider our efforts amply rewarded.



# CONTENTS

Sr. No.		Page No.
1.	<i>Bombay to Mumbai</i>	1
2.	<i>Mumbai – The History</i>	3
3.	<i>Brihanmumbai Mahangarpalika</i>	7
4.	<i>Mumbaikars</i>	8
5.	<i>Sweet and Sweat</i>	12
	- <i>Don't blame it on the rain!</i>	
	- <i>6.32, Platform No.3, Tej and Fourth Sitting</i>	
	- <i>Intellectual Revolution</i>	
6.	<i>"Iye Marathichiye Nagari"</i>	20
7.	<i>Bollywood</i>	23
8.	<i>Coffers</i>	29
9.	<i>Mecca of Cricket</i>	33
10.	<i>Festivals</i>	34
11.	<i>Mumbai Darshan</i>	49
12.	<i>Tourist spots near Mumbai</i>	59
13.	<i>Helpline</i>	64
14.	<i>Shop till you drop</i>	71
15.	<i>Yajnakarma [Eating out]</i>	74
16.	<i>All roads lead to Mumbai</i>	77
17.	<i>Future of Mumbai</i>	79



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## BOMBAY TO MUMBAI

Situated at the sea level, Mumbai's climate is temperate (humid). Though you may necessarily not need woolens in the absence of any period called winter here, the preferred all-time clothing is cotton. The rainy season of Mumbai is as famous and infamous as the city itself. For one, it has the capacity to bring the civic life to a standstill. Another, Mumbaikars brave it with equal zeal when, at times, they walk kilometres to reach their destinations. Starting on dot in June the rains stretch up to September with an average of 210 centimetres. In summer the temperature hovers between 34 to 23 degrees centigrade; while in winter the thermometer may dive as low as 16 degrees centigrade. Best season to visit Mumbai is from October to March.

Spread over an area of 430.86 sq. km., the Mumbai city is habited by approximately two crore people. Once a cluster of seven islands, viz.; Sion-Matunga-Parel, Mazgaon, Walkeshwar-Girgaum-Fort-Dongri, small Colaba, big Colaba, Worli and Mahim were connected to each other since the beginning of the 18th century to the later half of the 19th century. These connections completely transformed the geographical face of Mumbai and dissolved the concept of an island for itself. Then there came encroachment on the sea. The Back Bay reclamation project of 1864-65 provided space for today's Churni Road, Queen's Road, Churchgate Station and Mantralaya. The Nariman Point and Cuffe Parade schemes were implemented in the 70s. The clubbing of the seven islands paved way for construction of Sion Causeway, the straight road up to Thane, Mahim Causeway and Sion-Chembur road as well as laying of rail tracks up to Colaba. It was on 16th April 1853, when the first railway in Asia ran on the tracks from Mumbai to Thane. Since then the Mumbai

suburban railway network on Central and Western railway has achieved the distinction of being the largest of its kind in the world.

Today nearly 60 lakh Mumbaikars go up and down these two railways to keep this city running for 24 hours barring only two hours after midnight. Mumbai is supposed to be 'sleeping' during this brief period. Mumbaikars are not confined to Brihanmumbai only. They are spread over number of suburbs. They are dotted along Western Railway from Churchgate to Virar and further Dahanu Road, while along Central Railway from Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus to Kasara and Khopoli. Owing to the scarcity of land, the people started to find new places to settle down. Some of the suburbs have their own tell-tales dating back to historical times. Also there is New Mumbai set up to compensate the pressures on Mumbai.

Today's Mumbaikars may be busy in their routines. Even they may not be having time to look up at the fast changing times around them. May be they have accepted the changes, again, as a part of routine. But the city is proudly exhibiting its landmarks. They are the milestones that changed it from BOMBA' into Mumbai. They include the eleven forts built in 17th and 18th century. Only seven of them are braving the times in one form or the other; the progress of Mumbai port since first half of the 19th century, the making of Apollo Bunder (today's Gateway of India), first dry and wet docks and later on Prince's Dock, Alexandra Dock (now Indira Dock), and Mazgaon Dock etc. The American civil war influenced the cotton trade in Mumbai and earned traders of Mumbai a fortune. This very wealth was later used for construction of new buildings in the city. The opening of Suez Canal in 1869 provided business to ship-builders like Wadias and Walchand Hirachand. The end of American civil war pulled down the share market.

The rich perished. But the heritage buildings built during that period are still performing the role of living proofs of rise and fall of the colonialism and the swinging psyche of the makers of Mumbai. The Government House, Town Hall, Victoria and Albert Museum (now Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum), Victoria Garden (now Jijamata Udyan), Crawford Market, Old Secretariat, Central Telegraph Office, PWD building, Royal Alfred Sailors Home (now Police Headquarters), High Court, Mumbai University, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (earlier Victoria Terminus), Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, Prince of Wales Museum, Jinnah House, Roman Catholic Church, Mumbadevi Temple, the only Synagogue and Sun temple, Parsi Agyari and so on. These monuments are just waiting to speak. To speak about themselves and about Mumbai. Only they know how MO'BAIM became Bambai, Bombay and now, Mumbai!

## MUMBAI - THE HISTORY

Mumbai's history is essentially related to its unique geography. Islands of Mumbai and its environ are born out of Central Type Eruption of a volcano. The Indian plate, while moving from South to North crossed the Equator and the eruption occurred. That means islands of Mumbai were carved out, say, five crore years ago. The various kind of volcanic rocks spread over Mumbai and the suburbs are testimony to this.

The first footprints of man on the soil of Mumbai appeared about 45 thousand years ago. The Stone Age instruments were found in Borivili, Kandivili and other places. The history of geography of Mumbai was created out of fierce competition between man and the nature. And man won the race to a greater extent. Before man's intervention,

geological developments shaped the city. These developments repeatedly changed the climate and sea level and stopped about six thousand years ago.

Major A.W. Baird determined the mean sea level of Mumbai after painstakingly noting the maximum and minimum sea levels for seven years. Thus the Bench Mark denoting the mean sea level was erected in 1895 in the premises of PWD building. Today this Bench Mark is lost in oblivion.

Another geological miracle depicting the Central Type Eruption of volcano that gave birth to Mumbai islands is the 225 feet high Gilbert Hill at Andheri (West). This hill constitutes square and multi-angle shaped pillars of columnar basalt.

Mumbai was a part of North Konkan region. Many dynasties from Emperor Ashoka to Yadavas ruled this area. Mumbai has witnessed pre-Muslim history of about fifteen centuries. After the Mauryas, Satvahanas maintained their supremacy over this land up to the second century. Then came Saka-Satrap and Wakatakas. Though Chalukyas captured the North Konkan in the sixth century, Kalchuris shaped the history of Mumbai followed by Shilaharas. They ruled up to 1240 AD. In the 13th century Yadav king Bhimdeo took over the reigns. The places viz. Shitaladevi, Prabhadevi, Mahim (then Mahikavati), Dadar, Matunga date back to his times. Raja Bhimdeo made Mahim (Mahikavati) his capital place and carried out its all-round development, culminating it into the main trading port on the Western coast. Naturally, many foreign traders like Arabs, Christians and Jews came here for trading purposes and later on settled down forever.

In the 17th century Mumbai's life centered on Sashti and Gharapuri islands. All the ruling dynasties and their cultures flourished on these islands. Their fifteen hundred years of rule bestowed upon Mumbai a spectacular heritage of culture and monuments. From 1347 to 1947, i.e. for six

hundred years, foreign rulers occupied the Mumbai proper. Gujarat's Sultan had his say for more than 180 years. Portuguese, with their naval might, took over this earthly heaven and nurtured it for 134 years. Then British, mostly by way of luck, received Mumbai as a dowry gift from Portuguese. The Union Jack hovered over the Mumbai skies for nearly 280 years. The main reason behind this hand-over being the naval power of the succeeding invaders. The ancient habitants of Mumbai islands were fisher folk called *Kolis*. They are still there, spread over various Koliwadas like Sion, Thane, Versova, Mahim and Khar Danda. Their patron goddess, Mumba Devi, gave this city its name-Mumbai. The British had altered it to Bombay. The state government has recently restored it as Mumbai. The temple of goddess Mumba Devi is still there in the area named behind it.

From 15th century onwards, Portuguese the first European traders to land here, the Muslim invaders from Gujarat, their united fight against the Mughals, the entry of the Dutch, the British and the Malabarlis from Kerala, contributed in the trade and commerce in particular and all socio-cultural fields in general. British could lay their hands on these islands after the marriage of King Charles II with Portuguese Princess Catherine Breganza. The British transformed the face of this strategic city by building forts, docks and other huge structures. They keenly thought of developing Mumbai as a center of power after 1857, the year of Indian Mutiny. This year the British received a major setback to their political ambition in India. They brought the Company's treasure from Calcutta to Mumbai. From here, it was easier for them to have access with England and make movements of the army.

After the first railway in 1853, came the Mumbai-Calcutta road link. Construction of Gateway of India, Victoria Terminus, High Court building, Town Hall (Asiatic Library),

University Library, Vihar Water Supply Scheme, Malabar Hill Water Reservoir etc. were completed in due course. This legacy of Neo-Gothic architecture has given Mumbai the status of a heritage city. Mumbai's present gigantic transport system has its roots in the vehicles drawn by animals like bullock carts, *reklas* or borne by men (palanquins), trams pulled by horses and local trains running on electricity.

All said and done, now, it was time for the change. Time to start to think otherwise. The suppressive attitude of the British was slowly but firmly giving rise to discontent. Thinkers and political activists tore away the mask of economic policies of the rulers and contradicted the conception that the British Empire is transforming India into a rich cultural state. The mutiny, the unity of the Hindu, Muslims, and Parsees, unrest between the army and the police, the Bombay Plot, the first political strike, *satyagrahas* and law disobedience campaigns in 1930-31, Naval mutiny, Quit India call by Mahatma Gandhi in 1942, all posed a stiff challenge to the British. All these activities played a decisive role in the Indian Freedom Movement. At Apollo Bunder where the British first landed the last battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry marched towards their homeland in 1948, forever.

During the British regime, Mumbai was looked after by, in all, 56 governors. They were appointed by first, the King of England, then by the East India Company and lastly by the Royal Government of England. Some of them were instrumental in the shaping of Mumbai's history. Jerold Angier was engaged in infrastructural facilities, William Hornby, Jonathan Duncan, Mount Stuart Elphinstone, Robert Grant, and Lord Elphinstone had a vision for the betterment of Mumbai and its residents. While Sir Bartle Frere brought modernization, Lord Harris gave impetus to the development of cricket and John Clarke Sydenham looked after the propagation of science and commerce.

Today, Mumbai is the capital of Maharashtra. But it may be interesting to note that 14-year arduous battle was fought to keep Mumbai in Maharashtra only. The crisis cropped up when Congress party, while making 4 regions of Maharashtra, created a separate committee for Mumbai. Then in the *Mumbai Sahitya Sammelan* in 1938 and *Belgaum Sahitya Sammelan* in 1946, demand for unified Maharashtra state was made. The Dar Commission on languagewise restructuring of states was the bone of contention between the government and the *Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti*. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru witnessed stiff opposition to the bilingual state of Maharashtra and Gujarat in 1956 and 1957. At last the bilingual state was broken in 1959 and Maharashtra state including Mumbai came into being on 1st May 1960. When it came to the selection of the capital of Maharashtra, it was obvious that there was no alternative to Mumbai for this status.

## BRIHANMUMBAI MAHANAGARPALIKA

Well known as *Mumbai manapa* this biggest city corporation of Maharashtra has members (corporators) selected from number of wards spread over the greater Mumbai (*Brihanmumbai*), which stretches up to Mulund and Dahisar. BMC is well equipped to maintain the city with hundreds of employees and a large number of vehicles including garbage-collecting trucks, night soil tankers, animal pick-up vans. It runs schools and hospitals and other institutions and maintains playgrounds for welfare of the residents. This autonomous body is headed by a *Mahapoura* (Mayor) and an *Up-Mahapoura* (Deputy Mayor). Situated opposite to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, BMC'S huge building is a heritage site and worth admiring. Completed after 10 years

in 1893 this 235 feet high rugged building has a mixture of Italian Gothic and Indian Islamic style of architecture. Designed by F. W. Stevens in England it comprises a high dome, multiple small towers with domes and a 16 feet high statue of *Urbs Prima in India* and a spacious assembly hall, now used for the meetings of the corporators. A statue of the first Indian president of BMC, Sir Pherozshah Mehta has been erected in front of this building in remembrance of the yeomen services given by Sir Mehta to Mumbaikars.

## MUMBAIKARS

Mumbaikars are the ones who run this fast moving, affluent, industrial city and the economic powerhouse of India. They handle almost half of India's foreign trade. Apart from greater Mumbai and its suburbs, they are spread over 67 stations on Central Railway and 28 stations on Western Railway and many other places not directly connected by suburban railway stations. Suburban railway is an integral part of an average Mumbaikar's life. The rhythmic "sadaak-sattak-khad-khad-sattak" sound of the trains is engraved on his brain. It is the background music of his life.

It is said that a daily suburban commuter completes his sleep in the local train itself. A day of 24 hours is very short for Mumbaikars. Hence they are always in a hurry to save the time. For that, they never walk, they run! While going to work, doing it and returning to home it is interesting to watch their body language.

Though Mumbaikars are workaholic, they are sincere and honest. They are not forgetful but forgiving. A best example of this was seen after the serial bomb blasts that rocked this city in 1993. Within a week Mumbaikars brought

this city back on the ‘rails’. Mumbai has no time to muse over the past. What matters for it, is, today. What matters for it is, work, work and more work.

This very thing, work, has attracted people from foreign countries and almost all the states of India towards Mumbai. And these people have given this city a truly and unmatched cosmopolitan face and a fine blend of cultures brought in by them. A Mumbaikar can be Maharashtrian, Christian, Parsee, Afghani, Iranian, Muslim, South and North Indian and so on. Mumbai is essentially of Maharashtrians. But the city has evolved a multi-lingual and multi-religious culture since the beginning. It is a truly secular city in all aspects. Today almost 70% of Mumbaikars are from outside the city. They constitute more from the North than South India. Still hundreds of people land in this magnetic city daily in search of livelihood. And they are putting unbearable pressure on its limits.

Different places of worship spread over Mumbai and its suburbs are testimony to the history of the religious tolerance of Mumbaikars. The Mumba Devi temple (1753), Jumma Masjid (1837) on Shaikh Memon Street, the Afghan Church (1865) at Colaba, the oldest Portuguese Roman Catholic Church at Kalbadevi and British Protestant Church called the St. Thomas Cathedral (1718) in Fort, the first Synagogue, i.e. Jew Temple (1796) called Gate of Mercy in Mandavi, the only Sun Temple (1899) at Surajwadi in Bhuleshwar, Parsee Agyari (Fire Temple) (1845) on Churni Road, the first Dokhma, i.e. Tower of Silence (around 1673) on Malabar Hill and many others have preserved the moments of history.

Though the 30% Maharashtrians living here speak Marathi, Mumbai has no particular common language as such. No doubt, the mixed culture had given rise to a typical form of our national language—the *Bambayya Hindi!*

Classic examples of this language can be heard at many work places. It has also become a hallmark of a typical *tapori* (free, straight forward) bollywood hero in films like *Ghulam* or *Satya*. e.g.,

*“Aapun tere ko bola na, jyada shaanpatti karne ka nahin, kya?*

(I warn you! Don't try to be over smart. Okay?)

The linguistic History of Mumbai dates back to Portuguese time. In the 16th and 17th century, Portuguese was the language of communication. British also first used the same before English became the main language in the 18th century. British also acknowledged the importance of Marathi language in Chhatrapati Shivaji's times. Even they had deployed *Shenavi* interpreter experts in Marathi and English while dealing with Shivaji.

Today's Mumbaikars of various religions, castes and creed use their mother tongue in their respective communities. But in practice, Marathi, Hindi, Gujarati and English are commonly spoken in that order. Mumbai's culture has overcome every barrier in its progress. Naturally, language is no barrier while you are in Mumbai. This religious and linguistic tolerance has taught Mumbaikars to respect all faiths and adopt a common culture of work. Hard work, that is. This attitude is one of the main reasons behind the city becoming the industrial capital of India. Earlier, Mumbaikars used to come to greater Mumbai for work and return to their homes in the suburbs. Now owing to its all-round development, Mumbaikars go for work in all directions from almost all directions.

The Mumbaites are amazing and incredible. They know the meaning of life and how to live it to the fullest. They are always full of energy, extremely co-operative and warm and above all any visitor to Mumbai is always

welcome. Mumbai's business-trade culture is a separate subject of extensive research. Owing to this psyche, Mumbaikars have adopted the rule of law from British. Now it is in their blood. Courts, Municipal Council, Police Department, educational institutions including Mumbai University have also put forth ideal examples of clean administration. Mumbaikars know it very well that overall security and obeying the rules are inseparable. Hence the morality to respect the law is comparatively more in Mumbaikars than the residents of any other city in the state. An average Mumbaikar will never interfere in other's life. Live and let live as per one's wish is the *mantra*. This freedom about life-style is unmatched.

This very freedom is vividly expressed in their clothing habits. Influenced by the western and diverse Indian cultures over many centuries Mumbai resembles another India! If you are standing outside the Eros theatre, just watch the railway commuters pouring out of the Churchgate railway station. You will have a glimpse of the fashion panorama. Western out-fits (to suit the business and corporate requirements), suits, sarees of every hue and style, *salwaar-kameezes* and *ghagras*, readymade as well as designer wear, sleek semifinals, hep western wear of teenagers, shorts and skirts, painted jerseys. You have it. It is said that every clothing fashion starts from Mumbai. Bollywood's *masala* films help spread these fashions to every nook and corner. In front of the Mumbai Gymkhana, along the Cross Maidan there is an open street market of readymade garments.

The place is aptly named as Fashion Street. Surplus export quality garments tailored in latest trends are available here.

Mumbaikars are always out and travelling. That is why most of the time they eat out at numerous food centers and joints, graded restaurants and kiosks at strategic locations.

The average working class prefers to carry their tiffins. Still some kinds of food additives are not ruled out. People may walk, talk and eat at the same time.

## SWEAT AND SWEET

Owing to the moderating impact of the sea, the temperature in Mumbai undergoes very little seasonal change. In May, the warmest month of the year, the average temperature may be 32° c and January being the coldest one, the average is 24° c. The humidity in the climate is mostly high. The monsoon, influenced by the Arabian Sea, pours, sometimes like cats and dogs, between June and September.

Though the humidity in the air may make an outsider feel sticky, Mumbaikars, over the years get used to it. But there is one thing, you will never get tired. The perennial enthusiasm of Mumbaikars is an ample proof in this regard.

### ***Don't Blame It on the Rain!***

The rainy season and Mumbaikars have a unique relationship. Both of them try to outwit each other and emerge as joint winners in the end! The incessant rains may, sometimes, clog the suburban railway tracks and also block the few main roads running along the length of Mumbai. At that time the vehicle owners just sit in the vehicle itself waiting for the roads to clear. Some of them abandon their cars at parking lots and start walking on foot. Average railway commuters use the railway tracks to walk kilometres to reach their home or relative's or a friend's place to take shelter for the day. If the rains are incessant, long distance passengers take 'French Leave' if they are yet to start from the home or prefer to stay back at the office for a night.

Even some more smart Mumbaikars (everyone of them has to be) maintain a complete set of clothing in the office in case of a total drench. But whatever may be the situation; they never blame it on the rain! Now, with the advent of number of fly-overs coming up at strategic locations, they are expected to decongest the burgeoning vehicular traffic in Mumbai.

The successive rainy seasons teach Mumbaikars to keep presence of mind, use the wisdom and even, sometimes, not to use it at all! Your feeling about Mumbai's rain largely depends on the way you look at it. As they say, some people feel the rain, others just get wet! This poetic rain prompts the city administration to gear up itself at least one month in advance to face it. But come what may, monsoons in Mumbai are the most beautiful phenomenon and despite the odds and inconvenience it brings along, keeping Mumbaikars on their toes. It is the most loved season in the city and brings out the best in everyone, from romanticism to helping nature, from sincerity to laziness and from hopelessness of the system to the love for the city.

### ***6.32, Platform No.3, Tej and Fourth Sitting***

As said earlier, the suburban railway network of Western and Central railway is lifeline of Mumbai. Nearly 60 lakh commuters use them daily to reach any of the total 95 stations. Western Railway's suburban section, at present covers a distance of 60 Kilometers from Churchgate to Virar, which includes 28 stations. The first electric service on this railway started on 5th January, 1928. The Bombay Baroda and Central India Railway (BB & CI) was the forerunner of Western Railway that made its first journey between Surat and Grant Road station on 28th November, 1864. Now it runs 961 services daily with 64 EMU rakes having 12 and 9 car rakes. On a daily average basis about 4000 persons travel per train during the peak hours. To improve the

Mumbai Suburban Transport System, Mumbai Rail Vikas Corporation was set up in 1999 with the task of implementation of 12 rail projects under the Mumbai Urban Transport project-2. Western Railway will have its trains running on AC traction instead of DC traction in next 5-6 years. This revolution will help to increase the speed and acceleration of trains, there will be lesser break-downs, the load on power will decrease and the numbers of electricity sub-stations will also decrease. After independence when the regrouping was made, the Central Railway and Western Railway took shape on 5th November, 1951. Western Railway serves the whole of Gujarat and parts of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

The Central Railway's suburban network comprises Main Line and Harbour Section with a total of 67 stations. This system operates farthest up to Kasara (121 km) and Khopoli (115 kms) on Main line, while up to Panvel (50 kms) on Harbour Line from Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus. Started as the Great Indian Peninsular Railway in 1853, today's Central Railway suburban system, the biggest of its kind in the world, operates more than 1050 services daily. A train per two and a half minutes during rush hours, season ticket (credit cards accepted), vendor's pass, reserved compartments for ladies, handicapped and aged persons, authorized eateries on all stations are some main features of this local network. The Western Railway also boasts of being the first to start a *ladies special* local since 1992. Central Railway services Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana and Karnataka. Both the railways have celebrated their golden jubilees.

A visitor to Mumbai should better purchase ticket coupons to avoid wastage of time in the serpentine queues in front of the ticket counters. These coupons can be validated on any station through Coupon Validating Machines

before the start of the journey. The visitor should also avoid rush hours while using these locals because to board and alight these trains requires special skills. The locals stop only for some seconds on stations and hundreds of people get down and board them within a fraction of time. If one catches the train at the starting station and is to get down at the last terminal then one can have a choice of getting a seat. For shorter distances, a visitor must confirm as to from which side of the train he has to alight for his desired station and stand at an appropriate place in the gangway. Otherwise he is likely to be pushed out along with the alighting exodus on any undesired station.

An outsider's ignorance about this system is immediately spotted and the attentive daily commuters offer him a helping hand. The best way is to expose your ignorance and follow the instructions. Mumbaikars are accommodating and courteous. During a long local journey of more than an hour, a commuter sitting near the window gets up at half way through the journey and offers his seat to the first person standing near to him. The seniority is strictly following with natural instincts.

When a local is about to enter a station, the waiting commuters position themselves to enter specific compartments notwithstanding whether the train is empty or crowded. It becomes necessary to rush in even before the train comes to a halt in order to avoid getting the fourth seat. Inside, three people can seat comfortably on a single wooden bench but the 'extra' fourth person remains on a sort of tenterhook. The indicators, showing the last destination with slow/fast status, time, name of stations the train will not halt at or else, the platform number, the announcements of these details and the commuters taking their positions on the desired platform or reaching there by crossing the tracks or simply racing towards it via Foot Over Bridge, the whirling

sound of fans and yelling of those getting down from a just arrived train, all these give a feel of an atmosphere of another planet! A daily commuter has to be an expert runner and once inside the train his concentration must match to that of the Arjuna looking only at the bird's eye!!

Some commuters form their own groups and travel by a specific train. Naturally, to pass the time during the journey they engage themselves in some group activities. Playing cards and singing *bhajans* with the background music of *dholak* and *taal* are prominent among them. Other commuters may simply doze, read number of eveningers or newspapers brought from home or remain subdued in thoughts or blankly observe the people passing by when the train reaches a station.

The local trains are like a moving university. Without them Mumbai cannot be Mumbai.

Even before the trams pulled by horses bid adieu to Mumbai in 1954, bus service had started in the city. Today the BEST bus service is an equally integral part of Mumbai as like the suburban railway network and together they account for nearly 80% of the city's transportation facilities. Started as Bombay Tramway Co. Limited in 1873 this bus service was named as BEST in 1947. Today the BEST bus service plies on almost one thousand routes and on an average 45-lakh commuters benefit from it. Nearly three thousand BEST buses (75 of them being double deckers) operate in all directions of Mumbai covering a road distance of 1800 Kilometers through Mumbai, suburbs and right up to Navi Mumbai. With joint buses, ladies special, low floor buses for handicapped persons and pregnant women, smart card facility, extra buses during strikes, bandhs, disruption of suburban railways during monsoon, AC buses, vestibules, non-polluting CNG buses, women conductors, *Anandyatri* bus for sightseeing around Mumbai, *Ramani* bus for sightseeing

inside Mumbai, extra buses for Mahalaxmi and Mount Mary fairs, *Ganapati Utsav* and other religious festivals, the BEST is now ranked as only one of its kind in public transportation in India. BEST recently completed 75 years of its eventful existence. The first BEST bus ran between Sassoon Dock to Dadar on 15th July, 1926. Those days tram was the cheapest mode of transportation hence the BEST was considered as means for upper classes. Today introduction of sky-bus is being thought upon. The tram, which laid the foundation of local transportation in Mumbai, is enshrined in the history book. But this timeless bus service is well ahead of time, as it has no viable alternative to take its place even in the new millennium!

Another equally important ingredient of Mumbai's public transport is the taxi. Coloured in yellow and black, today they number almost 55,000 and carry approximately 30 to 40 thousand people daily. There are *share taxis* plying between specific places. Now for more comfortable journey, blue coloured A.C. 'cool cabs' have arrived (The *Mumbayya taxiwala* has been vividly depicted in number of Hindi films from *Guru Dutt's 'Aarpar'* to '*Gaman*' and '*Dharavi*') Autorickshaws are also not behind. Most of them ply outside the BMC limits.

### *Intellectual Revolution*

Balshastri Jambhekar pioneered the journalistic movement of Mumbai by starting the 1st Marathi daily *Darpan* in 1832. He even faced wrath of the society for advocating re-marriage of widows and allowing the converted to revert to their original religion. Today Mumbai press has become a hallmark of journalism with big groups like *Indian Express*, *The Times of India* and *Sakal* dominating the field. Other prominent newspapers include *Maharashtra Times*, *Loksatta*, *Mid-day*, *Mumbai Samachar*, *Navbharat Times*, *Samna*, *Urdu Times* etc. An average suburban railway commuter is catered

with hosts of eveningers in tabloid form. They are the prominent source for the daily happenings and have their own readerships. Many people carry their home newspapers to read in the train (provided they get a seat), again owing to the rush routine.

Mumbai has nurtured a pure tradition of acquiring knowledge in all fields. It was the basis of its progress. In this process the makers of Mumbai never restricted themselves as regards the sources, subjects, religions, castes or creed or nationalities. Transition of wisdom was subjected to tests, scientific temper emphasized, every state of the art technology adopted and continuously researched. In this movement eminent persons from such diverse fields as politics, industry, trade, education, media, law, engineering, factories and so on put their might for the betterment of Mumbai. To name a few of them, if not all, will be a tribute to the legacy left behind by them.

Literary Society of Mumbai (1804) worked to develop all kinds of knowledge regarding India. Today's Asiatic Society is born out of it. The visionary Governor Mount Stuart Elphinstone employed a policy to educate the natives so that the British could respectfully handover the state to them. The oldest Native General Library (1845) was the first public library in Mumbai at Dhobi Talao. It is still spreading knowledge, thanks to its inventor Raghoba Janardan and his mentors Balshastri Jambhekar, Ardesar Faramji, and Arskin Pery. Jagannath alias Nana Shankarsheth was instrumental in acquiring a place for English and Sanskrit in the school curriculum. His son Vinayakrao instituted a scholarship in the name of Nana since 1866. This scholarship was responsible for creating numbers of scholars, who went on to become leaders in various fields.

Bhau Lad, Atmaram Tarkhadkar, Anant Dukale were among the first 10 doctors (1851) rolling out of the Grant

Medical College established in 1845. Kashinath Telang, the first Vice Chancellor of Mumbai University (1892-93) was the brain behind its curricula as well as Bombay Municipal Act (1888) along with Sir Ferozshah Mehta. Anjuman-e-Islam took up the cause of social awakening and educational upliftment of Muslim community. Tayyabji brothers and Mohammed Ali Roge founded this organization. While Mumbai University was the first to confer degree in commerce, Sydenham Commerce College was the first of its kind in Asia and K. Subramani Ayer, Vithaldas Thackercy, Dinshaw Wachcha were the men behind its establishment in 1913. Mumbai's complete history is preserved in ten volumes due to the perseverance of Dr. George Moraes, a staunch admirer of Mumbai and the professor of history at Mumbai University. His 10 Ph.D. students compiled the volumes.

And then there was Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the champion of dalits and downtrodden, who donated his biggest personal collection of books, worth lakhs of rupees, to Sidharth College, Mumbai and Milind College, Aurangabad. Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) was established in 1883. Dr. Salim Ali took the society's objectives of nature conservation and birds watching as well as documentation to international heights. His *Handbook of Birds* and 10 volumes *Handbook of Birds of India and Pakistan* with Dr. Ripley and his autobiography *Fall of a Sparrow* are regarded as bibles in bird conservation.

The divergent cultural and religious streams gave rise to social organizations for the upliftment of the respective community. Prominent among them were, Pathare Prabhu Club, Deccan Maratha Association, Brahman Sabha, Daivajna Samajonnati Parishad and many others. They emphasized on education and self-reliance in the changing times and proved to be workshops for the activists. Then there is no equal to the generosity of the Tatas. Their great objectives for the

society at large, clean administration and planning gave rise to, in all, nine trusts. Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Tata Memorial Hospital and NCPA, Tata Theatre are serving millions in education, scientific research, technological development, medical services, social welfare and art. It was no surprise then, when we had our first nuclear reactor ready, TIFR had already created trained manpower for the same.

Today's Mumbaite women can effortlessly count their progress and status in the society on those selected women who showed exemplary courage and wisdom in the social transition. May it be the first doctors of the state like Manak Tarkhadkar or Dr. Anandibai Joshi, the first woman Barrister to enter Mumbai High Court to break the male domination in commercial practice of law, Kumar Mithan Tata or Madame Bhikaiji Rustom Cama, the first revolutionary woman from Mumbai who participated in the *Abhinav Bharat* movement of Swatantryaveer Sawarkar and unfurled the Indian tricolour in 1907 in Germany.

The Pandita Ramabai Road is a testimony to the efforts put in by Ramabai for upliftment of widows and destitute women through her *Sharada Sadan* in 1889. Not to forget are Aruna Asaf Ali and Usha Mehta. The former battled against the British in 1942's Quit India Movement and remained underground for three years, while Usha Mehta was closely associated with Mahatma Gandhi and clandestinely ran *Azad Radio* for anti-British propaganda.

## “IYE MARATHICHIYE NAGARI”

Today the 30% Maharashtrians in Mumbai are now shifting to far away places like Virar. They have successfully

maintained their traditions through festivals, music concerts, plays, art and cultural exhibitions and the Marathi press.

Marathi theatre has transcended the times and has remained a perennial source of cultural inspiration for Marathi Mumbaikars. Starting with the musical, mythological plays of the Gandharva Company of Shripad Narayan Rajhamsa alias Balgandharva, then Mama Warerkar's *Lalitkaladarsha* with imaginative, historical and mythological themes, *Natyamanvantar*, *Natyaniketan*, experimental and farcical plays by Malakar and INT, Vidyabhavan's play competitions, the resultant emergence of one-act plays, innovative plays by Rangayan and the Chhabildas movement of experimental plays by Aawishkar. Many a theatre companies found their roots and propagated throughout the state with the help of this movement. Playwrights, Krishnaji Prabhakar Khadilkar, Ram Ganesh Gadkari, Mama Warerkar, M.G. Rangnekar, P.K. Atre, P.L. Deshpande, V.V. Shirwadkar, Jaywant Dalvi, Vijay Tendulkar, Vidyadhar Gokhale, Ranakar Matkari, Premanand Gajvi, Vasant Subnis and many others have maintained the flag of Marathi theatre high. Young playwrights, who, of course, have emerged in Mumbai and have taken the Marathi plays across the seven seas, follow them!

Marathi theatre provides a launching pad for young and vibrant actors to enter into the world of television and films. These youngsters are groomed through various one-act-play competitions and they also undergo rigorous training at the hands of the renowned *Gurus* in the field. Though financial and other hurdles like the Marathi cinema plague this industry, it has remained the 'first love' for Mumbaikars, who throng the theatres to see the plays and their favourite actors. The established actors like Nana Patekar, Ashok Saraf, Rima Lagu and Rohini Hattangadi always yearn to perform on the stage as they get the real satisfaction of 'acting' through the plays. The favourite theatres include

Shivaji Mandir, Dinanath Natyagriha, Gadkari Rangaytan, Atre Rangmandir (Kalyan), Prabodhankar Thakre Natyagriha (Borivali), Vishnudas Bhave Natyagriha (Vashi, Navi Mumbai) etc. As for the Marathi cinema, the days of V. Shantaram and Dada Kondke seem hardly to come by. Certainly gone are the days when their numbers of hit cinemas celebrated silver jubilees (thus earning a place for *Kondke* in the Guinness Book of World Records). Secondly, the center of classical Marathi cinema has since years remained in the city of Kolhapur situated at more than 400 kilometres from Mumbai. Also Marathi cinema has lost touch with changing times thus depriving it the patronage of Marathi cine-goers. There are creative producers and directors like Sai Paranjpe and Amol Palekar holding promise for the Marathi cinema. But then, their films are more appreciated and awarded at foreign film festivals than back home!

One Maharashtrian (and he is only one of his kind) has taken the name of Mumbai to international levels through the dying art of Ventriloquism. He is Ramdas Padhye. With his puppet Ardhavatrao he is famous throughout the country and together they had brought many a smiles to the faces of millions of TV viewers. Ironically there is nobody to follow his suit and keep alive the art of Ventriloquism.

The National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA) at Nariman Point has taken up the task of preserving the theatrical history of whole India in the form of scripts, photo-strips, sound-strips and transparencies. Its Tata theatre and Experimental Theater hall are the two hallmarks for Mumbai's theatregoers.

Equally historical are the musical concerts in Mumbai dating back to 150 years. Mumbai is engaged in such concepts (*Mehfil*) throughout the year. It has come to stay as *Mehfil Sanskriti*. This culture was essentially born out of the need of the nomadic musicians to settle at one place and

the entertainment of the society. Government employees born out of the British educational system, rich lawyers and doctors, neo-literates and many others were provided with this very requirement.

Bhugandharva Rahimatkhan, Thumri maestro Maujuddin, Bhaskarbua Bakhale, Ramkrishnabua Vaze, Krishnarao Shankar Pandit, Sitarist Barkatullah, Bhaiyya Ganpatrao, Tarabapu, Anjanibai Malpekar and many others founded the *Mehfil Culture* in Mumbai. Public organizations like Parsee Gayanottejak Mandali (1870), Bombay Music Circle, Girgaum Music Circle, Gaondevei Music Circle of those times and, now, Sajan Milap, Dadar-Matunga Cultural Centre, Bandra Sangeet Sabha, and Vile Parle, suburban, Borivili, Kalyan Music Circles are continuing this tradition of music with great efforts.

## BOLLYWOOD

The journey of Indian cinema from screening of six films of the vast repertoire of the Lumiere Brothers on 7th July 1896 at Mumbai's prestigious Esplanade Hotel (now the Esplanade Mansion) to becoming the world's largest producer of films is spectacular and astonishing. The first screening comprised six films *Entry of a Cinematograph*, *Arrival of a Train*, *The Sea Bath*, *A Demolition*, *Leaving the Factory* and *Ladies and Soldiers on Wheels*. Today the Indian cinema has branched out into different languages with Mumbai as the prime center of Hindi film production.

Today Mumbai's filmdom, popularly called as Bollywood involves thousands of workers right from producers, directors, editors, technicians, cameramen, musicians, lyricists, extras up to spot boys. The equations of filmmaking keep on

changing as per the changing times. That is, sometimes the story demands and sometimes the public demands! Gone are the days when people who were destined to shape the Indian cinema used to find their ways to Mumbai! Today the qualifications for a Bollywood hero or a heroine range from simply being a son or daughter of a renowned film personality to being extremely beautiful. Minimum formal training in acting is not compulsory as a single hit film can make one a hot property overnight! This magnetic feeling draw hundreds of young aspirants from all over the country to this dreamland. A contemporary heart throb (e.g. Dharmendra, Hrithik Roshan) prompts the country youth to shape their biceps and start looking smart! It happens only in Mumbai!

In the initial years, the Lumiere shows were held in makeshift tents constructed on playground or any other open space, small halls of institutes like the Faramji Cawasji Institute at Dhobi Talao or in the hastily converted stage theatres like the Novelty or the Gaiety (now Capitol). The more elite of these shows were held at the Watson's Hotel and sometimes even in the imposing premises of the Town Hall. Thus began what was later to become a flourishing exhibition trade.

This extraordinary visual medium took its first major step on 3rd May, 1913 when *Dhundiraj Govind alias Dadasaheb Phalke* made the first full length film “*Raja Harishchandra*.” He valiantly struggled against all odds since 1910 when he had seen “The Life of Christ” and decided to take up the movie business as his profession. After eighty years of service in educating and entertaining people, the film industry has been recently given the status of an ‘industry’. Over the last hundred years, cinema has also created legends in their own lifetime.

The studio era of cinema can definitely be called the golden period of the fledgling medium in the country. New

Theatres, Prabhat and Bombay Talkies, Ranjit Studios were among the four great institutions of the studio era. A new history dawned in the Indian film industry with the first talkie *Alam Ara* released on 14th March, 1931 at Mumbai's Majestic cinema. The film was made by Imperial Studio's Ardeshir Irani and was based on a popular Persian play of the same name. Master Vithal and Zubeida were the lead actors and Prithiviraj Kapoor was the villain. Era of playback singing in films started in 1935. K.L. Saigal was the singing superstar of the 30's and 40's and became extremely popular for his songs like *Ghum diye mushtaqil*, and *Dukh ke ab din*. Each number was a new elegy to the death of the romantic dream.

The legendary beauty Devika Rani was the first lady of Indian Cinema. *Karma* (1933), *Acchut Kanya* (1936) catapulted her to great fame and later she took reins of the Bombay Talkies studio to become the first and the only female studio chief ever in Mumbai.

Indian film industry over the years has continued to rise phenomenally with Mumbai emerging as the main center of film production activity. Hindi films became extremely popular and till date act as the cultural ambassador of the country abroad. The Hindi cinema has given to its lover, singing sensations Noorjehan and Suraiya, singing legends like Lata Mangeshkar, Geeta Dutt, Asha Bhonsale, actresses of substance—Nargis, Madhubala, Meena Kumari, Geeta Bali, Nutan, Waheeda Rehman, film makers who endeared Hindi films to the cinegoers, Mehboob Khan, B.R. Chopra, K. Asif, Sasadhar Mukherji, Bimal Roy, Guru Dutt, Raj Kapoor and V. Shantaram. Music directors like Naushad, Shankar Jaikishan, S.D. Burman and singers with golden voice, Mohammed Rafi, Mukesh and Kishore Kumar brought music in cinema alive.

A host of talented artistes later made their vow to carry the torch of spreading the movement of cinema in the country. Music directors Laxmikant Pyarelal, R.D. Burman, film makers Yash Chopra, actors like Dharmendra, Manoj Kumar, Sunil Dutt and later the superstardom elevated Rajesh Khanna and Amitabh Bachchan to dizzy heights of name and fame.

Aamir Khan, Shahrukh Khan and other actors are true inheritors of their legacy. Actresses Sharmila Tagore, Hema Malini, Rekha, Sri Devi, Madhuri Dixit won admiration of the classes as well as the masses.

Besides the popular cinema, the art cinema also flourished with Hrishikesh Mukherjee, Shyam Benegal, Govind Nihalani, Gulzar leading the movement and artistes like Shabana Azmi, Smita Patil, Om Puri, Naseerudin Shah coming into prominence. The dream factory of India will continue to churn out new dreams for the people. And Mumbaikars will always be the first to witness them. Mumbaikar cinegoers are the craziest of their kind in the world. You can find them queuing up outside the cinema halls even at 8 in the morning! They decide the fate of any new Bollywood blockbuster. If they like the 'masala' in it then there are craziest of them who watch a single movie as many as 25 times. Legendary film *Sholay* staring Sanjeev Kumar, Amitabh Bachchan and Dharmendra had a successful run for continuous four years at the *Minerva* talkies (now no more) in Mumbai. *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* broke this record by successfully running for more than 300 weeks (more than six years) in the historical *Hindmata* theatre, again, in Mumbai.

Now owing to the changing mindset and tastes of the audience, sequels to successful Hindi films seems to be the new *mantra* for Bollywood despite the fact that filmmakers had burnt their fingers in the past for similar attempts.

Filmmakers do not get a chance to make sequels since countless replicas; killing the audience interest and leaving very little chance of making a good sequel follow one hit film. The example is of *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* a hugely successful film by the Rajshri Productions, directed by the immensely talented *Sooraj Barjatya*. The success of the story led to 20-25 other films exploring the same theme of joint families and Indian traditions, and the sacchrine sweet subject was chewed to bitterness. Five years down the line every filmmaker from Subhash Ghai to Satish Kaushik resorted to making family dramas leading to an exodus. Eventually, when Sooraj released his second film on the same subject, *Hum Saath Saath Hain*, it was a resounding flop.

Today the entertainment industry in Mumbai (including viz. films, television, cable TV, television software, music cassettes and CDs and radio) is trying to cross the sky. It is a huge industry in which almost 50 lakh people work in it directly or indirectly. As for film production India ranks next to US. In all 800 films are churned out every year. They include 250 in Hindi, 200 each in Tamil and Telugu and 150 in other languages. The average expenditure for a Hindi film is 5 crore rupees. In the year 2000, 412 Indian movies were exported entailing a revenue of 45 crores. The rights for TV telecast, music etc. fetch separate fortunes for each film. Thus the Bollywood entertains and also mesmerizes you, creates a dream city around you and forces you to forget the reality, at least for a while.

Now numbers of Hindi blockbuster and *masala* films are shot in foreign locations thus helping the tourism industry. People of Indian Origin are scattered all over the globe and they like to watch Hindi and other language films. Especially countries like Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Maldives (having historical relations with India) provide a big market for Hindi films. No wonder then various countries try to woo Indian

film producers from *Bollywood* for shooting their films (at least the song sequences) on exotic locations in their region. Thus bollywood films are being regarded as the biggest media to attract tourists.

Indians leading in IT revolution in the Silicon Valley of US are also attracted towards this lucrative entertainment industry centered in Mumbai with the latest technique of Imax. The Imax technique makes the picture deep and big and thus takes the viewer more close to reality. The half-circular screen in such Imax theatres can make any period film look contemporary. One such Imax theatre was started at Wadala in Mumbai, which is the first in India and largest in the world. Hopefully these technical marvels will help to keep the viewer glued to the theatre screen in the era of video-piracy. Otherwise the *Bambayya* Hindi films are fast losing their contents and objectives. In the absence of visionary producers, creative directors and commanding writers, the average *Bollywood* films are simply borrowing the ideas from western movies. Twenty years hence we will have very few milestones to remember like *Lagaan* and *Gadar*.

Speaking on *Bollywood* would remain incomplete without offering a tribute to the Superstar of the Millennium, *Amitabh Harivanshrai Bachchan* and the *Mangeshkar* sisters. Much of Bachchan's popularity emerges from his ability to transgress all forms of class barriers, or rather incorporate bits and pieces of every class through his own style and substance. A career spanning more than three decades had not been smooth sailing for Amitabh who says that his father's mantras had fashioned his entire outlook towards life and helped him cross the turbulent waters. After his initial films sank without a trace, the gawky young man could very well have gone home. But he chose to stay on and inspired by his father's mantra rewrote cinematic history with his angry, rebellious and larger-than-life image in

‘Zanjeer’ (1973) and many other films including the legendary ‘*Sholay*’. In astounding hit after hit, he continued with the ‘angry young man’ image, extending its possibilities, assimilating new genres like comedy and dance and the slow burn filament metamorphosed into the one-man industry who earned awards galore, honours and immortality in wax at Madam Tussaud’s Museum in London. This great superstar reinvented himself in a new avatar as the anchor of serialized game show *Kaun Banega Crorepati* and became a success story on the small screen as well.

Lata and Asha Mangeshkar do not need any introduction as they introduced themselves in every Indian home more than seventy years ago with their gifted voices and versatility in singing in almost every recordable Indian language! Till date these are the only two female playback singers who have been awarded the prestigious *Dadasaheb Phalke Award* for their contribution to music in the Bollywood. Each of them has more than 12,000 songs in at least 18 languages and non-film musicals to their credit and it is difficult to believe that they are able to sing with equal finesse for film artistes who are less than half their age, as well as older heroines. Especially Asha sings pop with the same elan with which she renders devotional songs and *bhajans*. The sensuality in her voice mysteriously disappears when she renders an emotional and sad song. And her smile remains as endearing as it was more than half century ago!

## COFFERS

Moneymaking is the bottom-line of Mumbai’s business psyche. All major corporates who form the Who’s Who of Indian industry and business have their main office in Mumbai. The Reserve Bank of India, all major financial

institutions and banks find themselves a compulsory place here. As time passes, the cash registers start ticking. In an atmosphere surrounded by computers, telephones, cellular phones, Internet, fax machines the city lives and breathes. Country's central bank and monetary authority, the Reserve Bank of India has its skyscraper building here. It looks after currency notes as well as monetary policies and management of the country's forex reserves.

Set up in 1875, the Mumbai Stock Exchange on Dalal Street is the oldest in the country. Brokers here, trade through computers and now the MSE has plans to introduce Internet trading on the bourse so as to reach each and every client's desktop. Currently the exchange's daily turnover is more than 1200 crore rupees. Today's MSE was once held under a tree in Fort area. It was then shifted to an old building and finally in the Jijibhoy Towers on Dalal Street. MSE's BOLT (BSE On Line Trading) system is spread over more than 150 cities in the country. Consequently there is a wide scope to increase the equity cult. One day there can be sub-brokers and remisiers everywhere. But the efficacy of the controlling authority i.e., Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) matters most. MSE also conducts training classes for investors of durations from one day to 3 months.

Comparatively, the National Stock Exchange at Worli is also using the internet to be able to provide stock trading to at least one thousand locations across the country through its Broker Web Plaza. Today, e-Commerce is the buzzword and soon there will be paperless financial dealings for all purposes. Undoubtedly, the citadel of such dealings will be Mumbai! The Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) here is the largest of its kind in India. Set up to meet the long-term capital needs of the Indian industry, today, it claims an asset base of nearly 60,000 crore rupees and gives long term loans.

The Pancharatna Building in Mumbai is the diamond center of the country. Over 1000 diamond exporters and their five thousand employees work from *Pancharatna*. They account for more than 50 per cent of the business. India's diamond business accounts for \$4.5 billion. Another landmark on the industrial skyline of Mumbai is the Bombay House. It comprises almost all companies of the Tata Empire worth 30,000 crore rupees. Erected by Jehangir Nasarvanjee Tata at the beginning of the twentieth century, this building was the centre of political activities in the 40's and 50's.

The Mumbai High field (earlier known as Bombay High), one of the world's biggest oil fields, was discovered in February 1974 and production was started in May 1976. Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) owns it. The existing facilities of Mumbai High (North), situated at 160 kms off Mumbai's west coast in Arabian Sea, include two process platforms, 35 well-platforms, one water injection platform interconnecting pipelines and oil and gas flow lines, which were developed in phases since 1976 when the field started production. The new infrastructure facilities after modernization of Mumbai High North and South will add to the capacity of the Mumbai High field, which almost accounts for 50 per cent oil production of ONGC.

There is an empty village in the heart of Mumbai. One hundred and fifty years ago, the first cotton textile mills were built, largely in Central Mumbai, in an area that came to be known as Girangaon—the village of the mills. In 2001, Swadeshi mills, one of the oldest, closed down, snatching away the livelihood of 2,500 workers with it.

The closure was just the last in a long line. Over 20 years, the clatter of looms, the wail of sirens and the clamouring crowds of workers have long given way to silence and sparse streets. Of the 52 mills, which lie

scattered in the city, only 11 private ones are still open and 25 National Textile Corporation mills are working at a 15 percent capacity. In 2000, the central government announced a policy for disposing NTC land all over the country, while the state government did the same for mills in the city.

The story of the fall of Girangaon is old and the laments so tired that they have all but faded away. But for many, the latest mill to tumble has briefly revived its significance the death of an industry that built Mumbai and the tragedy of a city that forgot its history. For a stretch of amnesia now runs through the city as high as the smokeless stone chimneys that dot the mill areas and as long as the reach of its coveted land from Byculla and Mahalaxmi to Elphinstone Road and beyond and hides what was once heart of Mumbai.

Initially encouraged by the British in the 1850s, the textile industry invited migrants largely from the Konkan and the Ghats in the late 19th and early 20th century. The industry prospered, met overseas competition and began to define the city by the 1930s; it employed 70 percent of the city's workers. Their militant strength kept them at the front of the Indian labour movement, and their mammoth strikes were an important part of the struggle for Independence.

During post-Independence period, the mill areas were the site of political struggle between the left and the newer Shivsena, a battle in which saffron beat red. It was here that the songs sung, the plays enacted, newspapers read, issues debated and political battles fought. Both mill owners and workers agree that the decline started after the massive textile strike of 1982, led by Datta Samant. The two-year strike was unsuccessful, weakening worker clout and paralyzing the industry. Today multi-storey shopping complexes and Entertainment Arcades like Bowling Alleys and Car Racing

Arenas are springing up on the lands of many mills. Only this important coffer of Mumbai has been unfortunately relegated to the annals of history.

## MECCA OF CRICKET

The city of Gavaskars and Tendulkars has another sport to die for. Cricket. It is in their blood. So much so that many a cricket legends from Mumbai have dominated the international arena for years together. The conducive environment in Mumbai is responsible for the rise and glory of the great cricketers like Vijay Manjrekar, Ramakant Desai, Ajit Wadekar, Madhav Mantri, Naren Tamhane, Sunil Gavaskar, Ramnath Parkar, Vinu Mankad, Bapu Nadkarri, Eknath Solkar and teachers like Anna Vaidya and Ramakant Acharekar. Sachin Tendulkar, Vinod Kambli, and Ajit Agarkar, all from Mumbai, represent the next generation of this gentleman's game. The Azad, Cross, Oval, Shivaji Park and Ramesh Dadkar Maidan are the sort of battlegrounds for the youngsters.

Their might is tested through various championships like Kanga (virtually conducted in rainy season on wet, muddy grounds), Times Shield Inter-offices contest since 1930 with more than 100 teams participating in it, and many others. Almost 330 teams are attached to Mumbai Cricket Association. Then there are M.I.G. Cricket Club, Bombay Gymkhana, Elf-Vengsarkar Academy, Dadar Parsee Zoroastrian Club, Rashtriya Club, and Omtex Academy etc. They have provided a heaven for budding cricketers who always dream of entering the national team.

## FESTIVALS

As like the Gateway of India, Mumbai has become home to a bewildering combination of blood and belief, customs and costumes, languages and living styles. It is said that almost all the tribes of Western India have flocked to Mumbai. The people of Mumbai include Brahmins, Prabhus, Marathas, Agris, Banias, Bhandaris, Bhatias, Jains, Katkaris, Kolis, Kunbi, Lohanas, Marwaris, Pathans, Thakurs, Vaghris and Varlis. The Muslim groups have Bohras, Khojas and Memons. Then there are the Parsees "makers of modern Mumbai"; Jews, Christians, Goans and East Indians. The influence of Arabs, African (occasional), Asians, Americans and Europeans can be seen among Mumbai's population.

Each group has its favourite locality in the city; Hindus in Giragaum, Muslims in Chakla, Mandvi, Umerkhadi and Nagpada; Parsees in Khetwadi, Dhobi Talao and Grant Road; Jews in Samuel Street and Israel *mohalla*; industrial workers (once there were thousands of them working in cloth mills, today most of the mills are closed so most of them have moved out) in the central area of Chinchpokli, Lalbaug and Parel. All these religious, ethnic groups observe their respective festivals with traditional enthusiasm and fervour.

The Hindu calendar year starts with the first day of the *Chaitra* month, which falls in April of English calendar and it is celebrated as *Gudi Padva*. On this day *Gudhis* are hoisted atop houses, which are attractively decorated. This day being one of the three and half *Shubh Muhurta*, (good omen) people start new works and ventures on this day. Then comes the *Ram Navmi*, the birthday of Lord Rama, which again falls in *Chaitra*. North Indians settled in Mumbai stage shows of *Ram Leela*. It is a day to foster social and

moral values envisaged by Lord Rama in the society. The birthday of Shivaji Maharaj, *Shiv Jayanti*, is celebrated ceremoniously through cultural programmes, rallies and processions in the city in the month of May. The Maharashtrian fondly remembers the greatness of Shivaji, without whom, Maharashtra would not have been there in the present form.

Parsee community celebrates *Jamshedji Navroz* festival falling in March / April. The Parsee New Year starts on this day with get-togethers and merry-making. It is celebration time for the lovable and peace-loving Parsees, when they bid adieu to the old year on the occasion of *Pateti* and welcome the New Year on *Navroz* day the following morning. Those, who follow the popular *Shahenshahi* calendar, the last day of the year in the Zoroastrian calendar, celebrate *Pateti*, in August. The day occupies a special significance for the Parsees as it is observed as day of thanksgiving and a time to atone for the sins that might have been committed during the year, so that one can begin the New Year on the positive note. The other two Zoroastrian calendars are the *Dasili* and the *Kadimi*, according to which *Pateti* and the New Year falls in March and July respectively.

The word *Pateti* is derived from the word *Patet* signifying special prayers that are offered in the Avestan language to *Zarathushtra* (the Zoroastrian prophet). The Parsees remember the departed ones and offer prayers for five days and *Pateti* marks the end of the period. They believe that the soul of the departed descends from Heaven during this time, and the living offer prayers for their salvation. The day begins with families, dressed up in their new traditional attire, offering prayers at the *Agyari* or Fire temples with sandalwood, flowers and lighting of lamps. The sacred ash is often smeared on the self by the devout. Most of them offer charity on this day. At home a feast follows with specially prepared delicacies like white rice, yellow *dal* and fried fish

*machchi patia* and curd with *sev* (vermicelli), *sali boti*, and *patra-ni-machchi*. Most of them throw parties for their friends and relatives at home. They also arrange *Jashn*, which is a thanksgiving ceremony performed by two or more priests for the well-being of the community, organized on various other occasions including house-warming, birthdays, and other functions. The day after *Pateti* is *Navroz*, the Parsee New Year, celebrated with much pomp and enthusiasm by members of the community. It is indeed time for joy and happiness for 1.20 lakh Parsees around the world. They participate in the celebrations and acknowledge with gratitude the contribution of the community in the field of culture, education, business and nation building.

Christians celebrate Mount Mary's Feast in September at St. Mary's Church at Bandra. This Feast is open to all others to participate to seek blessings of Mother Mary. Festival of lights, Diwali or Deepavali provides a unique opportunity to people belonging to diverse religions to rejoice and reaffirm the bonds of love and friendship through exchange of greetings and sweets. Falling in October/November, this festival brings light in the life of people who propagate it by illuminating their houses, temples and the surroundings with oil lamps, colourful *rangolis* and new costumes. Deepavali festival includes Padva (Bali Pratipada), again an auspicious occasion, to start new works and ventures, Bhaubeej—depicting the immortal relationship of sister and brother and Laxmi Poojan. On *Laxmi Poojan* day, especially the traders from all communities worship their account books and vow for honest trading practices.

The glory of this festival helps the common man to end the darkness of ignorance and poverty. Maharashtrians, wherever they are owing to their practical compulsions, make it a point to gather at their ancestral house to celebrate Diwali with their beloved.

Ramzan-Id is one of the important festivals of Muslims. It is celebrated at the end of the month of Ramzan. The devotees observe complete fast during the day in this month and break it at the sunset. The timing of this festival is decided as per the lunar calendar. Prophet Abraham is said to have sacrificed his son as per the wishes of the Almighty. To remember this sacrifice, the day is observed as Id-ul-Zuha by the Muslim community. On Christmas day, Christian community in Mumbai remains in joyous mood and also forth looking for the New Year's Eve. They attend churches, exchange especially homemade cakes and greetings. As like Deepawali, people belonging to other faiths also participate in the celebrations of Christmas extravaganza.

And then, there is this Ganapati Festival, the ten-twelve daylong celebration of the Elephant-headed Hindu God of wisdom, Lord Ganesha. This festival has a unique history. During the freedom movement, great social reformer Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak initiated this festival to bring the people together, in order to build their unity against the British. Now it is celebrated in households as well as through Sarwajanik Ganeshotsav Mandals on large scale all over Maharashtra. Big and small clay images of Lord Ganesha are installed amidst tastefully illuminated decorations. People wait for this occasion with great enthusiasm, which manifests into their feeling of belonging towards the community. At the conclusion of this festival the idols are immersed at various chowpattis like Dadar, Juhu and Girgaum. The memories of the celebrations linger in the minds of the people till next year's August/September and the chanting of *Ganapati Bappa Moraya* starts reverberating once again!

Come Monsoon, and the little villages in and around Pen in the Thane district as well as pockets of Girgaum and Lalbaug in Mumbai, stir up to the sight of huge mounds of clay taking aesthetic shapes for this festival. Ganesha-making

is a popular small-scale industry in Mumbai and its suburban parts. Around five lakh Ganesha idols are produced every year. There are families engaged in this industry since last, more than hundred years. Work on Ganesha idols starts nearly three months prior to the festival, which falls in *Bhadrapad* month of the Hindu calendar. The clay is specially ordered from Pen, the citadel of Ganesha statues, or Bhavnagar in adjacent Gujarat state. The clay is put into moulds and then left for drying for nearly a month. Drying of clay is very essential to ensure that it does not crack when installed in houses. A crack in the idol during the period of worship is considered inauspicious and a harbinger of troubles. The idol is immediately immersed in water if a crack is found or the statue breaks up. Once dried, the clay is ready to be coated with 'body paint' as it is known. The process of painting a Ganesha idol involves very long duration. Several coats of paints are applied on it. However, it is the painting of the eyes of Ganapati that indicates the painter's caliber and his claim to be a master craftsman. The eyes of the Ganapati are the soul of the statue. His eyes have to be painted small, yet they need to encompass an ocean of compassion in them. Every devotee searches for Ganesha's overwhelming benevolence in those eyes. After painting the eyes it is turn of the lord's ornaments that receive special attention. The range of ornaments is as mind boggling as dazzling. From intricate delicate artwork to an impression of the royalty, the elephant-god, appears all ready to bestow his devotee with *vaibhava sampanna* (full of wealth) as he sits on his gold studded throne decked in 'golden' ornaments. While most devotees stick to a form that has been worshipped by their families for generations, few dare to experiment with new forms and postures as far as family Ganesha idols are concerned.

The huge Ganesha idols ranging from 3 to 8 metres in height are a challenge to most artisans, a test of their

imagination and creativity. It is the *Sarvajanik* (public) *Ganesha* that assumes novel forms: from being studded with multi-coloured marbles, 25 paise coins, coconuts, conches, coloured rice grains, to being presented as an owner of a cyber cafe, a batsman in action, the host of *Kaun Banega Crorepati* (a popular TV serial hosted by superstar Amitabh Bachchan) to even sharing a word with politicians and the country's latest celebrity.

Strict rituals and traditions mark the purchase of the *Ganesh* idol. While 80 per cent of the people stick to the same sculptor only 20 per cent really try to experiment. Some even place their demands from USA and England, where they have migrated. Though now settled in foreign lands they refuse to change the sculptor from whom their families have been purchasing the statues.

While the new generation visualizes the festival as an occasion to socialize and let down their hair, for those struggling with their careers and family responsibility, devotion to *Ganesh* appears like the only solace in troubled times. When it comes to the kind of rituals to be followed during the festival nobody takes a chance. The festival, which received popularity due to the increasing efforts of freedom fighter Lokmanya Tilak, today is a far cry from its original motivation to unite people. Today it is competition that goads craftsmen to outdo a rival *Ganesha Mandal*. The height of competition is evidently proportionate to the height of the *Ganesh* idol, with each *Sarvajanik Mandal* ensuring a lavish and original background to attract more devotees.

Keshavji Naik *chawl* situated in the bylanes of Khadilkar road at Girgaum in South Mumbai celebrates this festival since 1893. It was one of the five earliest places, where the festival was started after Tilak's clarion call and survives to date, due to the efforts of the *chawl* committee and sheer perseverance. Today, Keshavji Naik *chawl* is the most respected

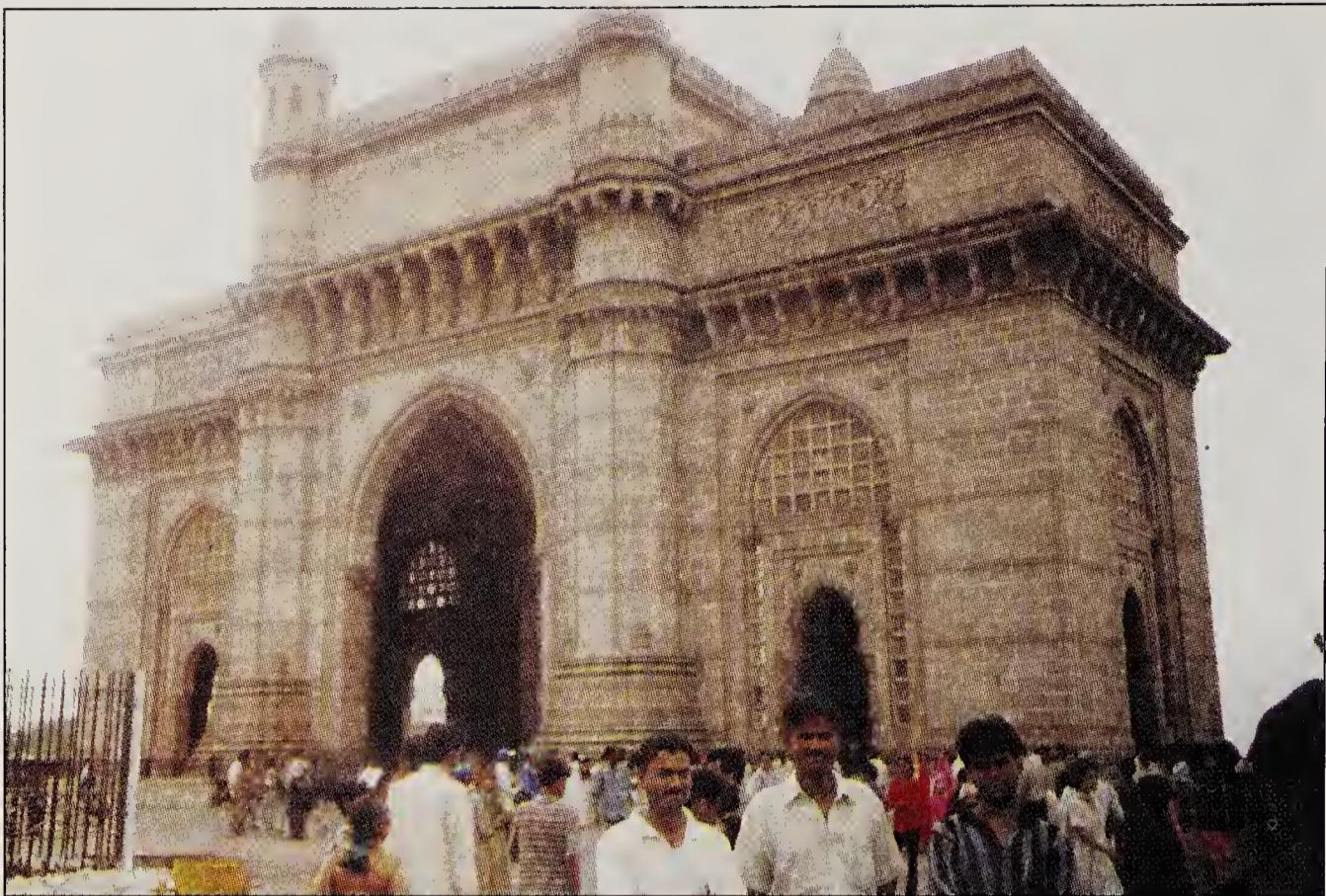
name in the city and state, having a unique place of its own in history standing shoulder to shoulder with famous Ganesha festivals like the Dagdoosheth Ganapati and Kasbapeth Ganapati of Pune and others. The celebrations have not lost their weightage and charm as many staunch devotees visit the venue over the years. Even residents, who have shifted to other places come back during the time to participate in the programmes and the festival, which holds a sentimental place in their hearts.

The nine days of Navratri are meant for the worship of Goddess Durga. This festival is also celebrated all over the state and by various communities like Bengalis in Mumbai in the form of Durga pooja. Goddess Durga is regarded as the destroyer of all evils in the society. The Gujratis celebrate Navratri festival with *Garba* dance. Now, numbers of private organizers have mushroomed in Mumbai who arrange shows of *Garba* dance on large scale involving crores of rupees. The last, i.e. tenth day of this festival is celebrated as *Dussehra*, another auspicious occasion. *Dussehra* is a symbol of victory of good over evil. Therefore, it inculcates a sense of responsibility in one and all to safeguard the society from all possible manifestations of the evil forces.

The birthday of *Lord Krishna*, which falls in the month of Shravan, is celebrated as *Janmashtami*. *Lord Krishna* was born at midnight; hence devotees throng the *Krishna* Mandirs to witness this occasion with traditional zeal. *Bhajans* and *kirtans* depicting *Lord Krishna*'s life and works, his childhood acts and the message of compassion and love propagated by him, are sung on the occasion. Fisher folk, the *Kolis* don't venture in the sea during the monsoon. One reason is that the raging sea may pose danger to their lives and boats, another, it is the time of laying eggs for most of the fishes. When the season is over, the *Kolis* express their gratitude towards the sea and ask his permission to venture into it for



Highrise buildings of Nariman Point



The Gateway of India - a favourite meeting spot for locals

Maharashtra State Legislature Building



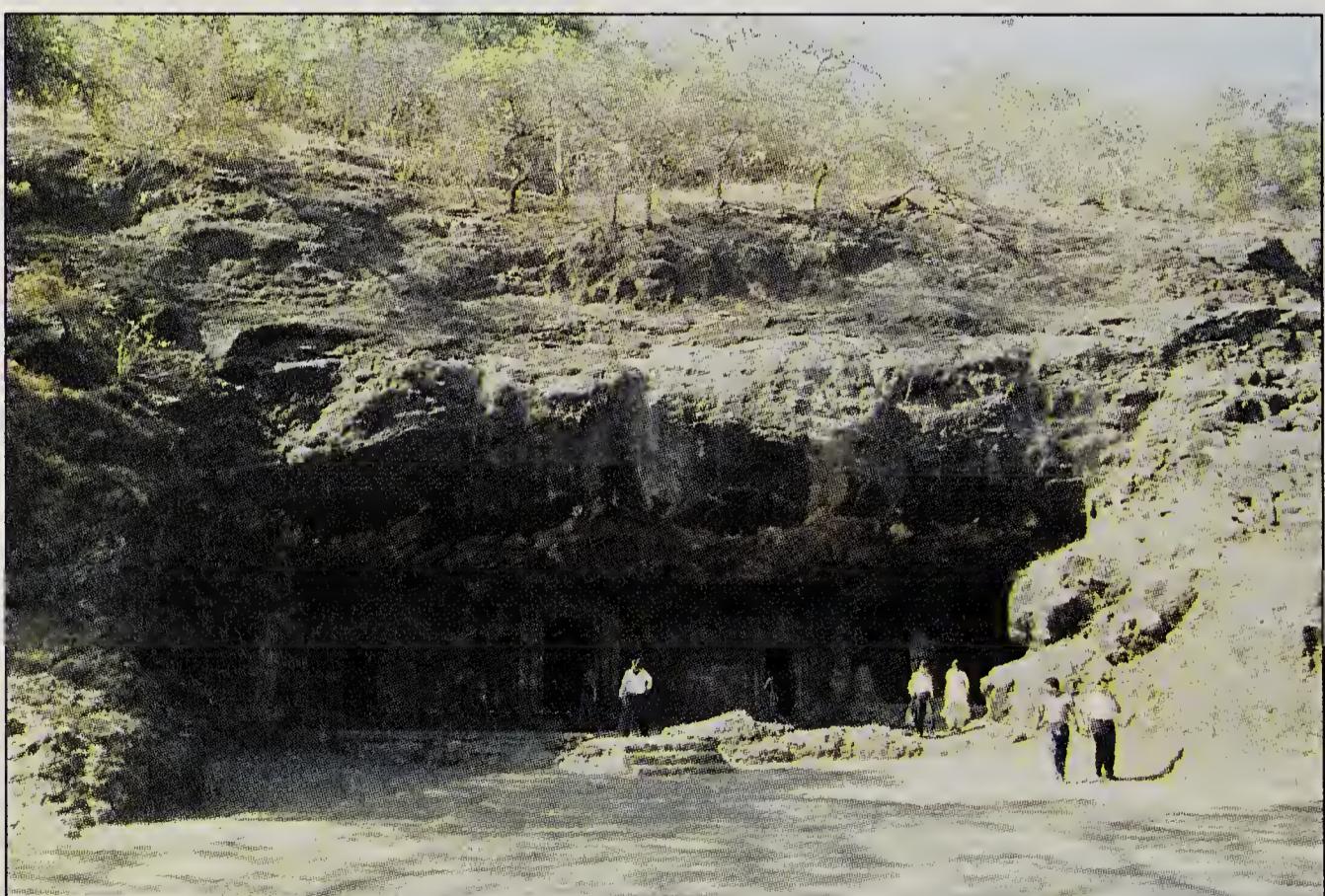


Rajabai Tower dominates Bombay University



Prince of Wales Museum, designed in Indo-Saracenic style, set in an ornamental garden

Elephanta Caves





The steepled Church of St. John Evangelist with fine  
stained-glass windows and carved pews



Mumbai's most popular promenades Marine Drive, built on reclaimed land, runs along the shoreline

Ferry service to the Elephanta Caves



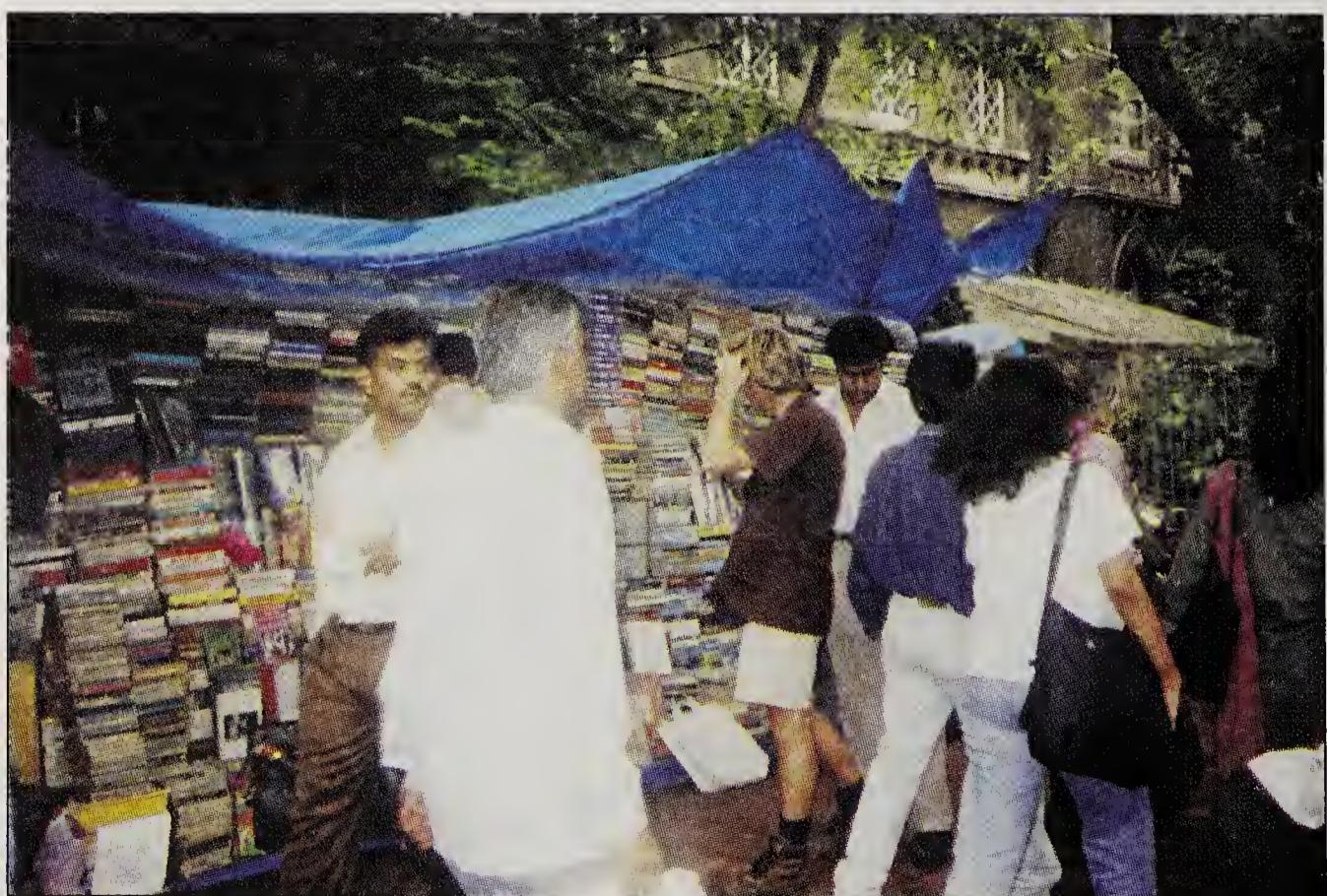


Brihanmumbai Mahanagarpalika Building



The majestic Taj Mahal hotel with a great view of the Gateway of India

Getting lost in the claustrophobic book bazars of Fort area



fishing by offering him a coconut. This day is called Narali Paurnima or the Coconut Day. A special rice using jaggery is prepared on this occasion. This day is also celebrated as Rakshabandhan. Sisters tie rakhis around their brothers' wrists as solemn affirmation of their bond and a reminder to the brother to take care of his sister in all difficult times!

There are some other festivals, which are unique to Mumbai. They include Banganga and Elephanta festival. The Banganga festival is arranged by the Maharashtra government since 1992 (probably in the month of January) at the backdrop of the historic Banganga temple located at Walkeshwar. It also houses the water tank built by the *Shilahar* kings of the eleventh century. Normally a rare treat of Indian classical music is given to the music lovers of Mumbai, in which renowned singers and musicians are invited to participate. Legend has it that epic hero Ram had visited this place in south Mumbai along with his wife Sita and brother Laxman during his exile. Not finding a drop of water, he shot an arrow towards the ground and water sprung there in the form of *Ganga*. Hence the name *Ban* (arrow) *Ganga* (water). Situated on an island in the Arabian sea, the cave temples of Elephanta spring to life in the month of February during the Elephanta festival. The cool breeze from the surrounding deep blue sea further soothes the spirits of the audience who are enthralled by the flawless performance of renowned vocalists and dancers from across the country. This festival is arranged every year (under the 100 year old Banyan tree) by the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation and is gaining more popularity every year. Additional launches from Gateway of India and trains are specially introduced for the smooth passage of the audience to the venue.

Year-end festivities also include Kala Ghoda Fair arranged every Sunday from the month of December to February next.

The fair focuses on handicrafts, garments, paintings and cuisines, which lure the people to have a glimpse of the ethnic taste. Occasionally 'Lavni', a traditional Maharashtrian folk dance, is organized to give a local touch to the show. The fair derives its name from *Kala Ghoda* where it is held.

The changing times have given rise to Times Festival. It adds enthusiasm to an already, changed atmosphere of Dusshera-Diwali in the months of October-November. Arranged in open spaces or grounds the festival of shop-n-fun is fast catching up the imagination of the discerning buyers. There are hundreds of stalls erected by companies depicting electronic items, clothes, leather articles, cosmetics, computers, crockery, curtains-linen, bicycles to household durables, various consumables, IT center and yes, eateries of all climes. You may not need to stack your pockets with currency to purchase here as all approved credit cards are accepted in this festival.

Villagers of various districts in Western Maharashtra have flocked to Mumbai for livelihood, since ages. Villagers from same district or tehsil have formed their groups (*mandals*) to carry out extra-curricular activities and of course, to share their sorrows and happiness with each other. Naturally, all festivals and celebrations are celebrated with great fervour and respect. The celebrations carry with them the special 'village touch'. Fairs and *Poojas* (worshipping) are carried out here. On the occasion of Gokul Ashtami (Birthday of Lord Krishna) *bhajans-kirtans* (chanting of religious songs and orations) along with *Bharud* (a folk song) are presented throughout the night.

But celebration of *Dussehra* by these groups stands out in all other celebrations. *Dussehra* being a holiday all group members get a chance to be present in the room at a time (otherwise they rarely see each other owing to their working shifts). The preparations for *Dussehra* start right

from the morning but the actual events unfold from four in the evening. ‘Lezim’ dance is to go first on the beats of *Halgi* (a traditional instrument made up of animal skin tightened around a ring). The villagers also form the *Lezim* teams. The “*chchullum chchullum*” sound of *Lezim* and “*tang-taang-dhitaang-tipaang-dhipaang*” sound of the *Halgi* mesmerizes the dancers as well as the onlookers. The dancers don a special saffron turban, full sleeves shirt and *dhoti*. By this time other team members are busy preparing a huge bunch of small branches of *Shami* tree. When the fever of the *Lezim* dance subsides all gather around the bunch of branches to loot them. Legend has it that *Kuber* had showered gold coins in order to repel the attack by Lord *Indra*. These coins had fallen on the *Shami* tree thus the practice to exchange the leaves of *Shami* (called as gold leaves) as a gesture of good wishes on Dussehra day began. Thousands of people from nearby places gather to witness this *loot*. The chief of the group whistles and at that time all group members charge towards the branches and start looting, snatching and running away with their catch. At times the competition becomes fierce, but once the ‘*loot*’ is over everybody greets the other person with an embrace and exchanges the golden leaves. Then the group collectively visits other mandals and exchange greetings. Such moments in the life of these villagers are far more ‘golden’ than the yellow metal itself.

Jews in Mumbai eagerly wait for the day of their ‘*Sabbath*’ festival, which falls in May. In the motherland of Jews, Israel, these days usher in the harvesting and storage of grains. During these three-day celebrations Jews gather in their place of worship i.e. the Synagogue. After the prayers they remain awake during the night. Special sweets are prepared and fresh grains, fruits are offered to the god. Story of ‘*Roz*’ is also read out on this day. Jews also celebrate ‘*Rosh Hashana*’ i.e. the New Year day. ‘*Hanukkah*’ is an

eight-day festival of lights which begins in the month of December. It commemorates the re-dedication of the Temple in 165 BC after its desecration by the Syrian King. Other traditional Jew festivals are *Tishba-e-aab*, *Kippur*, *Yorn Habbikhrim*, and *Simhath Torah* etc., which are celebrated by them with enthusiasm.

Novena festival of *Ramedi Mata* starts in the month of June. The church of *Ramedi Mata* is situated in Vasai in neighbouring Thane district. On every Saturday of this month people of all religions and faith gather in the church for prayers. *Ramedi Mata* is regarded as an incarnation of Jesus Christ's mother Mary. The worshippers believe that they can get rid of incurable diseases with the blessings of the Mata. The roots of this belief go back to Portuguese times. The word *ramedi* is an aberration of the Portuguese word *remedios* meaning curing of the diseases. *Ramedi Mata* was famous all over the world during these times. European travelers used to visit this place. The worshippers mainly include people from North Vasai and fisher folk from Koliwada. Some come walking from far away distances. The Vasai Christian community has accorded a place of pilgrimage to this church. *Ramedi Mata* is a unique symbol of enduring hope cutting across all religions and practices.

The ten days in the month of October–November from Ashwin Shudh Pratipada (i.e. Ghatasthapana) to Vijaya Dashmi (i.e. Dussehra) spread an atmosphere of festivities throughout Mumbai. The names of festivals may differ, but it is certainly insightful to see how this festival of repaying the favour of the mother earth, who gives bountiful of harvest, is celebrated with different styles like Navratra, Garba, Ramleela, Durgapuja, Vijayotsav. This is the season in which farmers worship their land, warriors their weapons, workers their tools and students worship the goddess of knowledge, Saraswati.

The *garba* played in the *Navratrotsav* (literally meaning festival of 9 nights) in Mumbai has now taken form of festival of youth. Actually the dance of *Dandiya Raas* (played with 2 sticks, one in each hand) originally related to the state of Gujarat, but now, it is celebrated throughout the city and the suburbs surpassing all boundaries. Its language is also one... like the *Bambayya Hindi* and the cosmopolitan face of the city. The origin of the word *Garba* is in the word *Garbha*. Through series of aberrations it has come to stay as *Garba*. The clay pots in *Navratra* symbolize the *Garbha* (i.e., foetus) and the lamp placed inside it is the seed. The *Garba* dance is played in circular fashion by keeping the pots in the center. This dancing is to felicitate the reproductive capacity of the woman and the earth. The songs sung while dancing also reflect the social issues and the need of equality. During the freedom struggle a message of patriotism used to be conveyed through these songs. Today the *Garba* songs have lost their soul. Words have become mum. Instead what reverberate in the year during the charged nights are only the tune, the lavishness, costly dresses and mind-boggling music. Pop *Dandiya* and Pop *Garba* are ruling the roost in the heart of young Mumbaikars who are out for fun and fun only. Such big shows attract prizes ranging from motorbikes to Europe tour with live coverage on special television channels and the Internet. The only condition imposed on this otherwise free-for-all atmosphere is the night time limit by the authorities.

There is saying in West Bengal that 'whenever four *Bengalis* gather at one place, they can immediately arrange for a *Durgapuja*'. It has been equally proven true by the *Bhadralok* and *Baudi* residing in Mumbai who have integrated their *Durga Puja* festival in the cultural atmosphere of Mumbai. Estimated 10 lakh *Bengalis* living in Mumbai celebrate this festival with great fanfare which, again, is open to all who believe in the mighty power of *Maa Durga*, the destroyer

of all evils. The history of *Durga Puja* in Mumbai dates back to 1929 when around 120 *Bengali* families took the initiative in Grant Road area on the terrace of a building. Today, the *Puja pandals* are erected at 12 places including Shivaji Park, Bandra Linking Road, Santa Cruz, Ramkrishna Mission at Khar, Lokhandwala Complex in Andheri, Goregaon, Kandivili, Mulund and at others in New Mumbai. The *puja* is celebrated for four days starting from the sixth day of the Navratra. On eighth and ninth day the Shivaji Park resembles a huge fair. One can easily spot *Babu Moshais* with their families savouring on a variety of fish preparations and *rosogollas*. Enthusiasts throng stalls selling *Bengali* sarees and books etc. The cultural programmes in the evening take the celebrations to dizzy heights. Performers in these programmes are specially called from Kolkata. *Bengali* songs take lead over other musicals. The increasing participation of non-*Bengali* people in the celebrations has prompted the organizers to stage shows even of Marathi plays. Most of the *Bangala-Mumbaikars* end the eighth and ninth day by biting into non-vegetarian items. They include *Doi Machch*, *Machher Jhol* (fish curry), rice and homely sweets. Like the *Ganapati* festival, *Bengalis* immerse the *Durga idols* in the sea on the tenth day.

Another unique feature of *Navratra* in Mumbai is the *Ramlila*, which arrived here along with the North Indians. Earlier they used to visit their native places in Dussehra. Later owing to increased industrial activities their visits decreased and they started the *Ramlila* shows in Mumbai itself. Pandit Shobhanath Mishra set up the first *Ramlila Samiti* in 1954 in the Fort area. Later on others took cue from him and established *Ramlila Committees*. Money was no constraint. Today Azad Maidan, Cross Maidan, Shivaji Park chowpatty, Malad, Borivili, Wadala, Chembur, Mulund and Kalyan are the main famous destinations of *Ramlila* festival. *Ramlila* mainly includes stage-shows based on

Ramayana. For all the ten days people are engrossed in the life of Lord Rama and Seeta and in the end rejoice when Lord Rama destroys the demon king Ravana. Larger than life effigies of Ravana are burnt at places symbolizing the end of the evil forces.

For Maharashtrians *Navratri* festival envisages *Ghatasthapana* and *Hadaga* for young girls. For *Ghatasthapana* a mud pot is placed on a hip of well-refined black clay in which seeds of various grains are sowed for germination. These seeds are preferably of those crops, which are normally sowed by farmers during the winter (*Rabi*) season. Thus a prelim test of the seeds is taken in order to judge their germination percentage if sowed in the actual field. Custom has it that these days food items made up only from grains are eaten. Everyday the goddess is offered a different dish. Daily a garland is offered to the pot (*Ghat*). The eighth, ninth and tenth days are considered most important and auspicious. On the last day the *Ghat* is dismantled and black clay along with the germinated seeds are scattered all over the field by farmers.

Young girls have their own channel of celebrating *Navratri* i.e., *Hadaga*. This innovative play-game is also called as *Bhondala* and *Bhulabai* in different parts of the state. In this group-game girls draw a picture or *rangoli* of an elephant in the foreground of the house or on the backside of a wooden sheet. The girls dance around the picture in rhythmic fashion and sing various songs depicting shades of human behaviours and relations. In the end the host girl of the play challenges other girls to guess the special dish or item prepared by her. If all of them fail to guess it then the host girl proudly announces the name of the item and distributes it to all of them. This traditional game requires no big ground or loudspeaker or lighting arrangement or sponsors or big prizes etc. Still the changing

time is tasting its longevity. In a city like Mumbai it has become more inevitable!

In the bustling crowd inside a railway station if you are pushed aside by a rushing commuter, do not expect an apology from him or her. Simply because he or she has no time for that! It can be vice versa. If you push somebody aside there is no need to say sorry. Even if you do, the person you have pushed aside may not be waiting for your apology. He or she already vanishes in the crowd. That is, Mumbaikars have no time at their disposal to waste over fighting (both verbal and physical). And sadly enough, they also have no time to laugh or giggle for a while. Probably this lacuna prompted them to establish Laughter Clubs. Around 3000 members of the laughter clubs in Mumbai practice the biblical adage; *love thy neighbor as thyself*, by sending colourfully wrapped chocolates and fresh sprays of flowers to their neighbours on the occasion of Neighbour's Day.

They observe First day of July as Neighbour's Day every year to drive home the fact that our relationship with people around us is very pivotal for personal development and stress management.

As part of regular practice, each member of the club invites three of the neighbours for a cup of tea/coffee or lunch, dinner or to share in an outdoor event to boost interpersonal relationship in times of hectic work schedule and stressed life style. Members are also encouraged to send in flowers, gifts, and tokens of appreciation to those living in the neighbourhood. Laughter club, which has 75 branches all over the city, propagates laughing as a therapeutic remedy for ailments and general well being.

A festival is celebrated in Mumbai, Mumbai International Film Festival. It is arranged by Mumbai Academy of Moving

Images (MAMI) and NCPA. Y.C. Pratishthan and Imax Adlab also chip in for its successful arrangement, which takes place usually in the months of November/December. On an average more than 100 foreign and Indian films participate in it. In order to attract youth towards the world classic cinema they are provided concession in tickets to films, which are shown in major theatres in and around Mumbai.

## MUMBAI DARSHAN

If you are reaching Mumbai via sea route, the Gateway of India is the first landmark that will greet you. Wittet designed this 26 metres high stone archway in the sixteenth century Gujarat style. It was built to commemorate the visit of King George V and Queen Mary to India in 1911. This Crypto-Moresque archway welcomed numbers of viceroys, governors and top civil servants as they disembarked from their steamers. An equestrian statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji and statue of Swami Vivekananda have been installed in the vicinity of this monument. Efforts are on to renovate this grand structure to retain its beauty and glory. Another outstanding structure is the Rajabai Clock Tower situated in Mumbai University campus. Designed by George Gilbert Scott and completed in the 1870s this tower houses the University Library. Businessman Premchand Raichand donated for this library in memory of his mother Rajabai. The tower is 280 feet tall and has five storeys. The top of the cupola is decorated with 16 statues and about 30 feet from the ground there are eight other statues representing the Indian castes.

Architecturally one of the finest railway stations in the world is the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (earlier Victoria Terminus). The native *Kolis* had their goddess *Mumba Aai*'s

temple here. Later on it was shifted to its present place. This Italian Gothic styled building was designed by F.W. Stevens. It was completed in 1888. The 160 feet high dome at the center and on top of it figure of a woman with torch symbolizing progress, figures of peacocks, snakes, monkeys and rats, marble columns supporting the entrance guarded by a massive lion and tiger in stone, are its main features. Millions of *Mumbaikars* use this station daily, which is the starting point of suburban railway network and also to long distance trains of Central Railway.

Situated on Dr. Annie Besant Road in Worli are the Nehru Planetarium and Nehru Science Centre. The planetarium arranges sky-shows with narration, music and sound effects as well as slide projections to learn something about astronomy in an easy way. The library here has a number of books on Space Science, Astronomy and Astrophysics. Also there is Hobby Workshop to give impetus to the creative knowledge to the children and those interested in making various things on their own. The Sky Theatre has a sitting capacity of 600. A giant projector is used to create the night sky as seen from anywhere on the earth. While the Nehru Centre comprises 'Discovery of India Exposition' as per *Pundit Nehru's* vision. India's history from pre-historic times to Independence in 1947 is shown here in the form of three-dimensional replicas of major architectural and artistic works, diorama, photographs and audio-visuals.

Father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi lived in Mani Bhavan (now on Laburnum Road) from time to time from 1917 to 1934. After his arrest here in 1932 he was taken off to one of his many prison terms by the British. It now houses a pictorial gallery, a 20,000-volume research library, a film and recording archive and a set of diorama on the Mahatma's life. Mumbai's many historical landmarks are today surrounded by bustling human activities. Still they

have not lost their grandeur. One such place is the Hutatma Chowk (Flora Fountain) situated in the heart of the city. It was erected in 1869 in honour of Sir Henry Bartle and Edward Frere, two outstanding makers of Mumbai. A statue of Roman Goddess of Spring, Flora and other mythological figures on its four corners attract the attention of the visitors.

Situated on B.G. Kher road on Malabar Hill the Hanging Gardens are now named after *Sir Pherozshah Mehta*, the barrister. Built in 1880 and renovated in 1921, these gardens are landscaped atop the three reservoirs that supply 30 million gallons of water to the city. In the morning people visit these gardens for yoga, calisthenics or just taking a walk, while at sunset one can get a stunning view of the city, the harbour and the hills beyond. A flower clock also is here. Though Mumbai is surrounded by sea there are very few beaches for humans to venture on. One such outing is the Chowpatty (literally four channels) Beach. It is situated at the end of the *Marine Drive* at the foot of the Malabar Hill. Here celebration of festivals such as *Coconut Day* and immersion of *Ganesha* idols take place. Besides little kiosks selling Mumbai's specialty, *Bhelpuri* and *Kulfi*, there are professional masseurs (remember Johny Walker in film 'Pyasa' singing "*Sar jo tera chakaraye...*"), pony leaders, bee bee-gun shooting galleries, contortionists, snake charmers, monkey-trainers, balloon sellers, flower-girls and lot more.

On the beach are statues of freedom fighters, *Lokmanya Tilak* and *Vithalbhai Patel* who were instrumental in the activities during the freedom struggle in Mumbai. In the pre-independence era Chowpatty has witnessed mass political meetings. It is not a mere stretch of land. If you wish to watch Sun setting over the Arabian Sea then *Marine Drive*, which transforms into what is called the 'Queen's Necklace' in the evening, is the best place. This electric necklace can best be observed from the *Pherozshah Mehta* gardens. One

also can ride in *Victoria* (Buggy drawn by horses) along this drive and get a feel of the British era. There are some feathered 'beautiful people' living here too in the oldest zoo in India, the Veermata Jijabai Bhonsale Udyan (earlier Victoria Gardens). Lady Frere opened the garden for public in 1862 and the zoo was established in 1863. Today this centrally located garden is at a few minutes walk from the Byculla station and spread over 48 acres of land. More than 200 animals of 30 varieties, about 450 birds of 60 varieties and 15 varieties of reptiles are displayed in the zoo. In all three historic structures are connected to this garden.

One is the David Sassoon Clock Tower. It is 67 feet high and built in the Palladian style. It has four faces of the clock. The plinth of the tower is of blue stone and the remainder of Porbunder stone. Another noteworthy feature is the triple-arched gateway. Jagannath Shankar Sheth, Prembhai Hembhai and Rustomji Jeejeebhoy compensated its construction cost. The third most important building just outside the udyan is the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, earlier known as Victoria and Albert Museum. Built in Italian Renaissance style of the architecture in 1872, it houses number of valuable articles like dresses, ornaments etc. and showing the transition of Mumbai through various periods. At the entrance of the museum there is a sculpture of an elephant. It has been brought from the *Elephanta Caves*. Handicraft articles made by children are also displayed here in a separate section.

The Gowalia Tank now renamed, as Kranti Maidan is the place from where Mahatma Gandhi gave the ultimatum of *Quit India* to the British on 9th August, 1942. The police lathi-charged and tear-gassed the protestors who had gathered here. In memory of this historic event a *Kranti Stambh* has been erected here. Every year an official function is arranged here to pay homage to the martyrs of the freedom struggle.

Nearby is the house of *Gokuldas Tejpal*, where in 1885, the Indian National Congress came into being. The busiest Nariman Point comprises some of the major official buildings. The new Vidhan Bhavan, the seat of the Government of Maharashtra is the main attraction. This majestic structure, which is close to the Mantralaya building, was completed in 1981.

Front part of this building is a large dome having two spacious halls of both the houses of Maharashtra Legislature i.e., Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council, which are called Vidhan Sabha and Vidhan Parishad respectively in Marathi. The other part of this building is a multi-storey structure, which houses various offices of the legislature. Then there are other conference rooms where all sort of meetings are held. A life-size statue of the social reformer Mahatma Jyotiba Phule is erected in the premises. The Mantralaya is located on the Madam Cama Road. The entire administration of the state is housed here. It comprises offices of the state ministers, Chief Secretary etc. The Nariman Point complex is a completely reclaimed area from the sea. The offices of Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation, State Bank of India, British Library, Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan, NCPA, CIDCO etc. are located in this complex. Air India's tall main building and Hotel Oberoi are also there facing the sea.

Cricket lovers of Mumbai flock to Wankhede and Brabourne stadiums. The first one was started in 1974. Brabourne stadium was dedicated to people by Lord Brabourne, Governor of Mumbai, in 1937. Wankhede stadium is suitable for 45 thousand spectators whereas almost 30 thousand people can enjoy the game at a time on Brabourne. Before Wankhede, Brabourne has witnessed the golden days of international cricket. A test match between India and West Indies was the first battle played on Wankhede. This

stadium is named after Barrister *Sheshrao Wankhede*, who, as the president of the *Bombay Cricket Association* took initiative in its construction.

Just outside the *CST* and adjacent to *Times of India Building*, there is another majestic structure with yet another founder member of *Mumbai*. Its name is *Anjuman-e-Islam* and is a sensitive witness to the changing *Mumbai* since last 125 years. With an objective to provide modern education to Muslim students and develop their overall personality, *Baddruddin Tayyabji* started this organization in 1874 with a mere bunch of 18 girls. Today *Anjuman-e-Islam* stands taller than its height with its 74 subsidiaries like *Sabusiddic Engineering College*, *Unani Medical College*, *Research Centre*, *Primary and Secondary School*, *Polytechnic* etc. In all 60 thousand students knock on the doors of their future through these facilities. The organization has its own *Marathi Literary Group* and a well-equipped library with 50 thousand books. Experts from diverse fields are called in to deliver lectures to refresh the knowledge of the students. *Tayyabji* brothers had seen a big dream. The *Anjuman-e-Islam* has grown even bigger than that.

*Swaminarayan Sanstha* has 6,814 branches all over the world. One of them is situated in *Mumbai* in front of *Dadar Railway station*. Built by exquisitely carved stones neither the temple nor its activities fit in our eye-span at one glance. Through its 8 medical centres more than 1 lakh patients are treated every year. Also the *Sanstha* has 23 permanent educational and computer institutes. To maintain the balance of environment plantation drives have been undertaken in more than two thousand villages. *Tribal welfare*, *Drug Abuse Prevention Centre*, helping the victims of natural calamities activities undertaken by the *Sanstha*. The chief *Swami Maharaj* has visited more than 45 countries and fifteen thousand villages. Numbers of *sadhus* in the *Sanstha* have completed

PhDs. Many others have denounced their lavish life-styles in foreign countries and joined here. One can see the satisfaction on their faces, which only comes through devotion towards work. No wonder then that Shri Swaminarayan Mandir is one of those pulses, which gauge the beating heart of Mumbai.

Another such place of worship and inspiration is the Japanese Buddha Temple at Worli. Inaugurated in December 1956 this attractive and beautifully decorated temple beckons to any tourist. The *sanctum sanctorum* is made of marble and the serene atmosphere adds to its pristine beauty. Delegations of Buddha *Bhikhoos* regularly visit this temple, which also runs a nursery.

Once impregnable by military standards, the forts in the bustling commercial capital, which have withstood the ravages of time since the last several centuries, are now threatened by developmental activities. The latest casualty appears to be the six-century-old Mahim Fort, which has developed several cracks. Alluding to cracks, which have developed in the foundation of the Mahim fort and other fortifications, conservation experts attribute it to the reclamation underway for the Bandra-Worli sea link.

The Mahim fort was built by the then Bombay Governor Gerald Aungier (1669-77) considered to be the founding father of the island city at the mouth of Mahim creek at the southern end of the present Mahim causeway. Over looking Bandra, it had strategic importance as a defense post against possible attacks by the Portuguese in Vasai and later the Marathas who owned Salsette. Mahim fort was further strengthened and Sir Thomas Grantham built small fortifications around it in 1684 when he held the possession of Bombay. In 1772, the Portuguese had ventured to fire on Mahim fort but the Englishmen retaliated the attack by shelling which also hit the church at Bandra. The triple-bastioned fort had

100 soldiers and 30 guns for defence. What remains of the fort are the mighty rampart from Mahim causeway as well as from Bandra reclamation. Woods and coconut groves, besides rice fields which once abounded in Mahim have long vanished and the only redeeming feature is the Nature Park here where mangrove cultivation has been successful. Conservationists say that reclamation has rendered the mouth of inter-tidal Mahim creek narrower which forces water directly towards the fort. It has also resulted in changes in level of seawater, which is now diverted towards the Mahim-Worli coastal belt.

Mahim fort is not the only fort in the city, which is facing problems. The Sion fort, Worli fort, the Sewri fort, the Mazgaon fort as well as the Dongri Hill fortress and the Bombay Castle are facing some problem or the other. "Sion" is a Portuguese corruption of Marathi word Shiva, which means a boundary or limit. Sion village was the boundary between Bombay Island and Salsette (Sashti). Governor Aungier built it on the top of a conical hillock, now situated a few metres away from the Sion Railway station on the Central Railway. At the base of the hillock, is the branch office of Archeological Survey of India (ASI).

This 17th century fort overlooks the salt-pans in the creek beyond and the Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers factory. Since it is a spot for Sunday picnic, revelers at times engage in graffiti on the surfaces of the edifice. The Worli Fort, built by Portuguese, is on the headland jutting into the Mahim Bay. It was provided with a cannon and armed with seven to eight guns and manned by an Ensign and 25 soldiers. The old Worli fort has almost been quarried and levelled and has been built up with complexes. In 1896 it was devoid of any roads and now it is one of the most posh areas of this commercial capital. The hill on which Sewri Fort stands has also been quarried. But ruins of the small

fort can be still seen. The cannon on the fort had thwarted the Portuguese invasion on the coastal stretch between Sewree and Sion in 1772. Yadi Sakart of Janjira Island had earlier conquered Sewri and Mazgaon forts in 1689. This fort had a garrison of 50 sepoys under a Subedar and was equipped with eight or ten guns. The Mazgaon fort and Dongri fort are also facing similar problems.

The other delightful places and structures for a discerning tourist to see include, the University of Mumbai, High Court, the Town Hall and Horniman Circle, Western Railway's headquarters near Churchgate Railway Station, General Post Office, Fashion Street, J.J. School of Art, Taraporewala Aquarium on Marine Drive, V.J.T.I. and Five Gardens in Matunga-Wadala area, Aarey Milk Scheme near Goregaon, Chhota Kashmir, Picnic Spot and the famous Film City.

Nhava, off Mumbai's grime-encrusted coast, is not just another little island in the Sun. Catch a launch at the gateway's slippery stairs or at Ferry Wharf, and in a matter of an hour you will be on this island where history and modernity go hand in hand. For it is here that the *Rahman* is docked-Asia's first and only ship where merchant marines train.

The Wadia family, as it was originally known, gifted Nhava or 'Monja Naveh', to Haji Ismail Yusuf, proprietor of the Bombay Steam Navigation Company in 1883. The Ismails and the Wadias were very good friends, and the latter thought his friend Ismail could utilize the place more effectively to train sea men, and so he gifted it to him. In 1970, the government acquired half the island, and that's where you have the ONGC and Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT).

The sprawling 20-acre island is a beehive of activity. The ship was established in 1910 by Sir Ismail and is the first and only one of its kind in Asia. The training center

conducts 18 courses, including a specialized one on communication on ship, which is available only at Nhava and in the United Kingdom.

The training center has kept expanding. In 1981 it got Survival Center and in 1984 a Fire-Fighting Complex was added. The Barnes Navik High School, funded by the National Union of seafarers of India, is being constructed for providing pre sea-training courses for both ratings and officers.

The island also has the 20-bed Fatima Banu Hospital, which caters to the medical needs of the nearly 5,000-strong population of Nhava village at a subsidised cost.

The jewel in the island's crown is India's oldest marine museum established in 1912. The museum takes the visitors through a fascinating maritime journey and is a veritable travel trove on archaeology, architecture, boat building, ship models, shipping sagas, coastal forts, marine schools, maps, charts, paintings, period furniture and portraits. The ground floor is devoted to the history of Indian shipping. Also on display is an antique 200-year old 'machwa' boat, which was owned by Sir Ismail's family.

The first floor is devoted to photographs and literature on things like the hydraulic lift, the Bombay Steam Navigation Company, which in the year 1865 became the first Indian-owned shipping company on the West coast of India, the story of the Rahaman and the history of the Scindias-one of the biggest Indian shipping companies which built the *S.S. Jalusha*. On the second floor, interesting memorabilia of Sir Yusuf's family, like a unique triangular cupboard from Belgium, a Burmese Xylophone and chandeliers are displayed.

## TOURIST SPOTS NEAR MUMBAI

As we have seen, Mumbai proper is a heaven of heritage sites and other wonderful places. To visit to explore their history, beauty and to enjoy them one must have ample time at one's disposal. One cannot 'see' Mumbai in a single day. Let us move out of this *Mayanagari* and find out the places worth a visit around it.

Start with the Ghodbunder. It is a tiny village, seven kilometres away from the Borivili suburban railway station. The village is situated at the base of small hill, which overlooks the Bassein Creek i.e. Vasai Khadi. On top of the hill is the Ghodbunder Fort, which was under Portuguese rule till 1737, when the Marathas conquered it. MTDC has got a Holiday Resort here. Approximately 40 kilometres away from Mumbai are the Madh, Marve and Manori beaches. Also one can visit the Aksa, Erangal and Gorai beaches that fall in the same stretch and are ideal spots for rest, relaxation and sightseeing.

At Gorai near Borivili is the Essel World, a huge complex of western games, water sports and number of entertaining games. One can reach here by a motor launch service from the Gorai creek or by a vehicle via Bhayander, one of the railway stations on Western Railway. Another equally amusing place of fun and games is the Fantasy Land situated in the vicinity of Jogeshwari on Western Express Highway. The famous Shiva Temple of Ambarnath is believed to have been built by the Shilahara King Munmuniraja in 1060 AD. The exterior of the temple is decorated with beautiful figure sculptures related to Vaishnava and Shiva themes from the *Puranas*. The interior of the shrine reveals lavishly carved surfaces. A local fair is held on Maha Shivratri every year. There are local trains from Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (CST) to Ambarnath (61 KM).

At a distance of 61 kilometers on the Mumbai-Pune Highway, Karnala Bird Sanctuary is a birdwatcher's paradise offering a sight of variety of bird species, even to casual picnickers. About 150 species of birds have been spotted here, 30 of which are migratory. The rare Ashy minivet, a native of the Philippines, has also been seen here. There are two distinct bird watching seasons. At the beginning of the monsoon, one can see Paradise Fly Eater, Sham and Nalabad Whistling Thrushes. In winter, many species of migrant birds like the Blue Thorat, Large Cuckoo etc. can be seen. There are State Transport buses from Mumbai Central to Pen, which is 20 km away and nearest railway station is Panvel, which is 12 km away. Karnala Fort is a favourite spot for mountaineers (raplers). The fort is topped by a 125 feet high structure, which appears to invade the sky, and it provides a great challenge for climbing and rapling.

The temple of Maha Ganesh makes Titwala an important pilgrim center for devotees. Titwala is a railway station 75 km away on the Central Railway. Built by Bahadur Shah, the Sultan of Gujarat between 1526-1537, the *Bassein Fort* (77 km) was intended to guard the coast against foreign powers. Ironically the fort passed hands from the Sultan to the Portuguese, Marathas and finally the British. To visit this fort, the nearest railway station is Vasai Road (7 km), from where buses are available. From here 19 km away is the beautiful sea fort of Chhatrapati Shivaji. There are buses connecting Vasai city and Arnala village and then ferry services to the fort. Ganeshpuri is 82 km away and is famous for Shri Gurudev Ashram, spread over an area of 75 acres. Swami Nityananda founded it in 1949. His disciple, Swami Muktananda settled here permanently and the Ashram began to grow. Around the Ashram is a new township set up for adivasis or *Warli* tribe, the local inhabitants. Swami Nityananda's *samadhi* and Bhimeshwar Ganesh Temple are near the ashram. The nearest railhead is Vasai Road (29 km)

on Western Railway and Vajreshwari is 3 km away from here.

The hot springs, stretching about 7 km in the bed of the river Tansa are mainly situated at Akloli, Vajreshwari, Ganeshpur and Satvalli. The temperature of the water ranges between 43-49 degrees. At Vajreshwari (82 km) one can enjoy a hot spring bath in an exclusive and closed bath called Kothawalla bath. At Akloli hot springs, there are provisions for long tubs and showers. Nearby are Vajreshwari Temple, Bassein Fort, Parshuram Temple and Tungareshwar. Nearest railhead is Vasai Road. The Tansa Lake and Wildlife Sanctuary are situated in Thane district, 103 km and 90 km away from Mumbai respectively. The quiet but immense water-spread of the lake nestles amidst the thick forest of Tansa. The wildlife sanctuary occupies an area of 216.75 sq.km. It is home to the tiger, panther, sambar, cheetal, barking deer, wild boar, jackal, common langur and Bonnet Macaque. The warriors of Chhatrapati Shivaji inhabited the Mahuli Fort nearby. The Batsai Dam is 15 km from the sanctuary and is an irrigation project. Atgaon (14 km) near Kasara on the Central railway is the nearest railway station.

Alibaug is a small seaside town (108 km). It is also a convenient base for visiting Kihim and Nagaon beaches and the Kolabad Fort, which is approachable only during the low tide. While Kihim is an exclusive beach laced with lush coconut trees just 120 kms away from Mumbai and 11 km from Alibaug. Less than three hours from Mumbai and 30 km South of Alibaug lays a virgin beach, Kashid. With silver white sands and lush green rolling hills this is an ideal spot for peace-lovers. Murud (165 km), 51 km away from Alibaug was the capital of Janjira state. It is beautifully situated with a long stretch of alluring beach, where the water is very safe for swimming. It is also famous for the Janjira Fort. Once a formidable fort, constructed in the 17th century, this fort

now stands in ruins. Janjira Fort is approachable via Rajpur (6 km) from where it is connected by boat services. Nearest railhead Panvel is 22 km away.

Karla Caves are famous for their Buddhist rock-cut sculptures. The Chaitya here is the largest in the country. At the entrance of the caves is the temple of Ekvira Devi worshipped by a large section of Hindus. One can also enjoy water sports facilities with accommodation arranged by MTDC at the *Karla Water World*. The nearest railhead is *Malavli*, however the convenient railhead is Lonavala, which is 11 km away. Lohgad and Visapur are two famous forts of the 18th century situated 6 km from the Holiday Resort at Kalra. The Bhaja Caves are 12 km from Lonavala. These caves are as old as the Kalra Caves. Cave number 12 is a Chaitaya Hall, the finest of the cave complex. There is a motorable road up to the foot of the caves and thereafter a distance of 1.6 km is to be covered on foot. The Bedsa Caves are 23 km from Lonavala. There are two important caves with many inscriptions. Nearest railhead is Kamshet and then by bus one can reach the *Bedsa* village. The distance from *Bedsa* village to the caves is 3.5 km on foot.

Igatpuri (137 km) is a small town in Nashik district, famous for the Vipasana International Academy, which conducts courses in meditation. Malshej Ghat (154 km), a popular hill station during the monsoon, is an ideal place for trekkers, hikers and for solitude seekers. It is also an abode for the famous migratory Flamingoes during the monsoon. Kalyan Junction on Central Railway is the nearest railway station. There are State transport buses from Kalyan to Malshej Ghat. Dahanu, situated to the north of Mumbai, is a quiet and pleasant seaside town with a sprawling uncluttered beach. Dahanu Road is a railway station on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad section of Western Railway, connected with important cities and towns in Western India. Dahanu Fort is also worth a

visit. Nearby excursions include Gholwad (13 km) a beautiful beach resort with several orchards. It is a railway station on Western Railway. Bordi is a quiet place with miles of uninterrupted beach. Trimbakeshwar, which is 180 km away from Mumbai is placed Southwest of Nashik. It is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas in India and an important pilgrim center for the Hindus. The holy river Godavari is said to have its source here in the Brahmagiri Hills. Nashik Road (28 km) is the nearest railway station for Trimbakeshwar. There are many dharmashalas here.

Jawhar is a popular hill resort in the Thane district. It is famous for its vibrant Warli paintings. Places worth visiting here include Jai Vilas, the palace of the tribal lords, the relics of Bhupatgad, the scenic beauty of the Dadar Kopra Falls and the enchanting Hanuman and Sunset points. Jawhar is connected by road via Dahanu and Nashik. Nestling between two lakes, 45 kms from Pune is the picturesque Panshet Resort. Located between Panshet and Varangaon dam, it is unique water sports center. Sailing, kayaking, motor-boating, water scooters, hovercrafts are made available here by MTDC. The nearest convenient railway station is Pune.

Gentle winds, soft sands and inviting waters make Srivardhan Bay irresistible to beach lovers. And if one relishes seafood, there is no dearth of delicacies to sample here. The town of Harihareshwar, 19 km from Srivardhan, is known for its tranquil and picturesque beach and is also famous for Kalbhairav, the Shiva Temple. Harihareshwar is connected by road with Mumbai via Panvel-Mangaon on Mumbai-Goa Highway. The nearest railway station is Mangaon (65 km) on Konkan Railway.

Mumbaikars always feel the need to rejuvenate themselves due to shortage of time and time only. But whenever they get a chance they go gaga over it. And, thanks heaven, there

are two heavenly spots just 80 kms from the hustle-bustle, viz., Lonavala and Khandala. These joints are especially sought after in the rainy season. Situated on mountain tops in the Sahyadri range of mountains they provide exclusive and endless live footage of green valleys, bustling small water streams and falls jumping over the mountains. The only condition to enjoy is you must get wet in the rains. Once you reach there both the mind and soul automatically change gears to match the speed of nature. Khandala and Lonavala are 4 kms away (walkable for trekkers) from each other. While reaching there by road (i.e. Express Highway) Sahyadri mountain ranges provide spectacular views to the eyes. The trip to hill station Lonavala is incomplete without a visit to the nearby Bhushi dam. In the peak rainy season the dam overflows and one can sit on the stairs adjacent to the dam to let the overflowing water pass over one's body. This is to be experienced rather than described. Over the years number of people visiting these natural place is increasing many fold, thus putting pressure on accommodation and transportation.

## HELPLINE

As said earlier, Mumbai has got almost all the firsts to its credit. This is equally applicable when it comes to emergency services. There are ambulance services operating round the clock like Lonica ambulance at Parle, Parsee ambulance at Metro and Swati ambulance in South Mumbai. Also there is no dearth of hospitals providing state-of-the-art health-care for emergency and general patients. Numbers of renowned doctors in different specialities always interact with the world medical community for adoption of the latest know-how in health-care. This can be rightly judged by the

organisation of international conferences on various medical subjects in Mumbai by Indian Medical Association's City Chapter.

The prominent hospitals in Mumbai are Cooper, Nanavati and Asha Parkeh Hospital at Parle, Bharatiya Aarogya Nidhi at Juhu, Bombay Hospital at Marine Lines, Breach Candy on B. Desai Road, Hinduja at Mahim, Jaslok Hospital at Byculla, K.E.M., and Tata Memorial at Parel, Lilawati at Bandra, Nair Hospital at Mumbai Central. Healthcare for children is available at Children Orthopaedic at Haji Ali and Wadia Hospital at Parel. There are number of blood banks attached to almost all major hospitals. Oxygen service at various locations, Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) at Parel, Bombay Presidency Kennel Club at Khar (West), All Night Chemists in South and North Mumbai, support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, Tata Institute of Social Sciences at Deonar, Chembur, Indian Association for Promotion of Adoption and Child Welfare at Matunga (West), Asha Sadan (rescue home and service for children) near j.J. Hospital at Byculla, AIDS Counselling Centres like Forum Against Drug, Indian Health Organization, The Salvation Army, then for the women in trouble, there are Women's Centre at Santacruz (East), Stree Mukti Sanghatana at Dadar (East), Asha Daan at Byculla (West), Bapnu Ghar at Worli and MAVA (Men Against Violence and Abuse) at Mahim. It can be seen that the humanitarian services from healthcare to psychological and social problems available in Mumbai are unmatched.

People who are well supported in the precincts of their family and society may not understand the insecurity being faced by the helpless people. Especially for such unsupported women life becomes a jigsaw puzzle. Divorced or widowed women find it more difficult to take care of themselves and their children. There is one organisation to help such destitute women, called *Adhar* situated in Girgaum. The word *Adhar* literally means support in English. The

organization first started with poor students from nearby schools by adopting them. The students do not return once they pass out from 12th standard and they can face the future themselves. But this did not deter *Adhar* from continuing with their zeal. Later on needy women themselves approached the organization. These women were provided with sewing machines, which helped them in self-reliance. Today *Adhar* is a ray of hope for these women but even after 10 years in the service it does not have its own building.

The daily life in Mumbai is increasingly becoming risky and complex. Long journeys to and fro for work, pollution, and changing climate are taking their toll on human body. Thus it becomes necessary to maintain the health of body and mind. Therefore in order to make people aware about mental health, maintain the balance of mind and support the mentally retarded, the Institute for Psychological Health (IPH) situated in adjacent Thane district is working since 1991. A look at the calendar of programmes taken up by IPH can give the idea about its reach and results. Camps on stress management for small children (0-12 years); adolescents (12-20 years) and their parents are arranged by the institute. In order to fill up the generation gap the parents are explained about the problem and issues concerned with the children. A programme called *Manthan* involves a complete family and the issues within the family are deliberated vis-a-vis each member. Apart from special camps for mentally retarded children and personality development *Vanprastha* and *Pimpalpan* are the two notable programmes run by IPH. Life after retirement from service poses many challenges. Hence through *Vanprastha* the elders are guided as to how they can make best use of the time at their disposal. Prospective brides and grooms are educated through workshops on male-female relations, sexual relationships, selection of life partners etc. In all IPH stands for 'mental health' of the society at large.

There is *Bapnu Ghar*, literally meaning 'Father's Home'. The name itself is self-explanatory. In order to provide a rightful shelter to the women, which are discarded by their in-laws and left to fend for themselves. Manu Subedar, the founder of Lotus Trust in 1953, felt the need for such a 'home'. The responsibility of this 'ghar' is being looked after by Maharashtra State Women's Council, which is situated alongside the Nehru Centre at Worli. This home is open twenty-four hours for the needy women. '*Bapnu Ghar*' first tries to handover the woman to her family members, her husband and in-laws as the case may be. If all these efforts fail then the woman is made a member of the Ghar-family and measures to rehabilitate her or get her divorce (if necessary) from her husband are taken up. Many women have started their lives anew with the help of *Bapnu Ghar* and are ready to face the challenges of future.

Most of such helping institutes in Mumbai are working ceaselessly without any pomp and show. Another such destination is Anand Niketan situated on sprawling 7 acres area on Dr. E. Moses road at Worli. Looked after by a trust committee appointed by the state Governor 'Anand Niketan' receives aid from hospitals of Brihanmumbai Nagarpalika for their patients being treated here. The range of facilities here include, treatment on physically challenged persons, deaf and dumb children in the age group of 10-12 years; Akanksha Project for slum children to make them self-reliant through vocational training and production of various items; Om Creation Trust for adult mentally retarded girls in which they are subjected to a 4 year programme envisaging their overall development; Bal Ashadham i.e. adoption scheme for orphaned and helpless infants are taken care up to their 5 years of age; Welfare of adolescent mothers in which they are helped up to delivery and then their siblings are adopted in *Ashadham* and they are handed over to their families and lastly *Jaipur Foot Project*

for average grown-up boys who are physically handicapped and need an artificial limb.

Nirgudkar Pratishthan is working since last 20 years in the field of music, arts, education, and medicine, spiritual and cultural fields. Pratishthan is an ideal example of how people help others to help themselves. The Pratishthan has envisaged a multi-faceted project and accordingly has established an 'Institute of Indian Culture and Heritage'. The facilities being provided under it include training of classical music and its research, a hospital providing treatment through various medical system of allopathic, ayurvedic and homeopathic medicine etc.

First Air Ambulance has been started in Mumbai which is another 'first' added to the credit of this city. The service will be useful to transfer a patient from one hospital to another and transport doctors to the spot of an accident in case of emergency. The service has deterrents in the form of non-availability of space to construct helipads and the huge expenditure involved in its operation.

There are numbers of help centers for healthy elders, senior citizens but very few for persons who are suffering due to old-age as well as various ailments. There is one such old-age home run by Dr. Maharudra and Dr. Shailajabai Wagh at Jogeshwari.

Vivekanand Seva Mandal is situated in East Dombivili in the adjacent Thane district. The mandal was started by a handful of aspiring engineering students with a vision. Before adopting and transforming a village named Vihigaon, these crusaders had experience of running a library for engineering students on no-profit no-loss basis; case studies, group discussions and oration of educational experts under the programme 'Go For Absolute Leadership' (GOAL). They held exhibitions of skills in acting, music, dance and other arts

through 'Srujan' programme. In the era of consumerism these youth remain aloof from publicity and progress towards the goals set for future while helping others to achieve their own in the way.

They started with a lot of hope and a simple yet meaningful slogan "Together we can make a difference". Ten years down the line, the voluntary organization Akanksha, which means aspiration or hope, stands tall, having made in a world of difference to hundreds of less-privileged children, and working in the same direction for a hundred more. A registered charitable trust, with nearly 1500 underprivileged children under its umbrella, Akanksha started off as a small project in 1991, basically a dream of an enterprising collegian Shahin Mistri, who chipped in her pocket money to buy toys and teaching aids for the children. She is the founder and Managing Director of the organization. Today Akanksha is spread far and wide and has 27 full-fledged centers, 22 of which are in Mumbai and the rest in Pune. Located in the premises of schools, colleges, public buildings or offices that lend their spaces free of charge, Akanksha has built a reputation for itself as a low cost educational unit, a center which give children quality time each day away from the harshness of the slums. The structured, safe environment provides these children with the security necessary to gain self-confidence and kindles their ambitions and desires to change their lives. Aimed at providing a balanced education to the slum children, Akanksha yearns for their intellectual and emotional development. The 200-odd volunteers, give their time for a cause, and the numbers are forever increasing, with more and more college students, housewives and retired persons, are spending time with Akanksha, doing their bit in whatever way they can.

Following are some of the important phone numbers/web sites and tips for a Mumbai visitor.

For all kinds of railway inquiry phone numbers are viz., 131 (for manual inquiry), 132 (for live information about trains on IVRS), 133 (for recorded information about arrivals), 137 (for information about PNR and availability of seats) and 2075950, 3005959, 8075959 and 6705959 serve the same purpose as 137. Also there are Touch Screens installed on major stations to serve the above information. These numbers are subject to change any time. Hence, to be on safer side websites viz., [wr.railnet.gov.in](http://wr.railnet.gov.in) (on line), [westernrailwayindia.com](http://westernrailwayindia.com) (on line) [wr.railnet.gov.in/mobile](http://wr.railnet.gov.in/mobile) (on mobile phone) and for PNR and availability of seats [indianrail.gov.in](http://indianrail.gov.in) can be surfed on Internet.

For information on every happening in and around Mumbai one can dial phone number 6005555 or visit the number of websites like [timescity.com](http://timescity.com). One can get information about arts and entertainment, beauty and health, education, hotels and restaurants, movies, services directory, shopping, travel, maps, yellow pages, bus routes, bills payment, smart routes, clubs, bars and nightlife, city news, sports events, festivals, weekends, telephone directory and weather etc. These sites are regularly updated thus giving the latest information on all above-mentioned subjects. For reporting of any important secret information the Mumbai Police has a *Daksha Nagarik Yojana* i.e., Alert Citizen Scheme, which can be accessed through the phone number 2633333.

For events like birth and death anniversaries, dance and music programmes, theatres, lectures, exhibitions, discourses, miscellaneous programmes, Radio (Mumbai A & B), Cinema (English, Hindi and Morning Shows), weather, Sun, Moon and Tide, Almanac, National and International flights out of Mumbai and availability chart of railway reservations etc., daily edition of any major newspaper may be referred to. For a tourist it is desirable to purchase latest timetables of railway and BEST buses, which are easily available outside any railway station to plan the sightseeing.

Also there are numerous periodicals devoted to happening in Mumbai published on weekly and fortnightly basis.

## SHOP TILL YOU DROP

This is not a mere saying in Mumbai. If you have decided to explore all shopping opportunities in a modern city then this is the right place and Mumbai is sure to exhaust you in the process. Variety and choices of material available here is mind-boggling. Take a walk along Breach Candy, Linking Road or Colaba Causeway to Kemps Corner and you will find yourself surrounded by the shopping world! You can spend hours (may be, days), looking, selecting and purchasing items made from leather, women's wear, footwear, jewellery, toys, furniture, cosmetics, souvenirs, ethnic clothes, intriguing antiques, unique foodstuff and international brands. The list is endless. Surely you will have to refill the wallet. If one is sure about what one has to buy then area-wise planning can make one's shopping experience satisfactory and pleasurable.

The official places for purchasing target items include the Central Cottage Industries Emporium at Colaba, U.P. Export Corporation's Gangotri at Cuffe Parade, Haryana Government's Emporia, Black Partridge at Nariman Point, Gujarat's Gurjari on J. Tata Road, Himachal's Handicrafts Emporium in Cuffe Parade, Jammu and Kashmir's Emporium at World Trade Centre, the Keralite Kairali in Nariman Point, Khadi and Village Industries Emporium and Rajasthani of Rajasthan again on Dr. D.N. Road. The departmental stores include Akbarallys in Fort, Santacruz (West) and Chembur, Amarsons Collection at Breach Candy, Asiatic Departmental Stores at Churchgate, Shopper's Stop at Andheri (West) and Foodland on Juhu Tara Road.

Owing to the distance between various places of shopping it is better to have first hand information about areawise shopping centers. The following list will surely help for those who are interested but would like to save their energy and avoid getting bored. Dhobi Talao area is known for Sports goods, while for book-lovers swanky book shops as well as roadside sundry book sellers (original and second hand) will surely engage them for hours together in Fort on D.N. Road and at Prarthana Samaj in Girgaum. The most frequented places by women for shopping of sarees and other clothes are Queen's Road and Kelkar Road in Dadar (West), Dadar T.T. and Swadeshi Market in Dadar (East), Mangaldas Market, M.J. Market, Princess Street and Dadar (East) near Hindmata Cinema.

One should know that Brihanmumbai and suburbs are spread in North-South direction and both the Central and Western railway divide number of places and suburbs into East and West sides. Hence it becomes necessary for one to know the exact side (East or West) of the place in order to find the shopping place and also to come out of a local railway station from the correct side.

For artificial goods the places preferred are Chor Bazar, Colaba and Apolio Bunder, for leather goods one has to visit Dharavi (Sion), Crawford Market and Bhendi Bazar. The historical Crawford Market is also known for variety of fruits which pour into Mumbai daily from far flung places in the state through hundreds of trucks. Mumbai is also a leading destination for export of fruits and flowers owing to the facilities of cold storage and international air services. While travelling in suburban trains one can see the fisher folk, mainly the women carrying bamboo baskets full of fresh fish from the sea in the luggage compartment. The smell of the fish can be unbearable to others but for the *Koli* women it is the tradition. These baskets find their place in Shivaji Market and again in the Crawford Market.

For electrical goods, Lohar Chawl is recommended while for electronic items including computer parts Lamington Road, Grant Road, D.N. Road and Hira Panna Shopping Centre are the favourite places. Mumbai has carved a decisive place for itself in the business of gold jewellery and diamonds. The place familiar for shopping of these items include the Zaveri Bazar, Opera House, Hughes Road, Bandra Linking Road, Ranade Road in Dadar. The name Dadar is derived from the word 'dadar' meaning a ladder. If one is coming towards Mumbai by road or train one cannot avoid Dadar before entering into the heart of Mumbai. Dadar has occupied a pride place in the heart of Maharashtrians. Dadar is junction for both the central and western railway's suburban network and also for long distance trains.

The name is Chor (thief) Bazaar. But nothing is suspicious here as everything is dealt with openly. This bazaar is situated in the five lanes connecting Ibrahim Rahimatullah Marg and Sardar V.P. Road. It extends up to J.J. Hospital, Bhendi bazaar, *Don Taki* (Two tanks), and Gol Mandir. In 1974 it was mainly a fish and mutton market. Later on locals started using this place for selling new and discarded articles. Eighty percent area of this Chor Bazaar is occupied by spare parts of motorcars whose principles are 'old is gold' and 'the cheaper the better'. Rest of the market houses wooden furniture like beds, chairs, sofa-sets, statues of every hue and cry, bronze and brass articles, glass chandeliers of various types, old wall-clocks, big radio sets, tape recorders, electrical goods, old clothes etc. The bazaar (permanent shops) remains closed on Friday and hawkers spread their goods in front of the shops at throwaway prices, as they have to sell off everything by the evening. The permanent shop onwers also purchase items from them. The fact that the turnover of this *bazaar* is 50 crores per month is enough to prove its importance. Hence the economy of purchasing is unique. The rates do not depend on the demand-supply

ratio. Instead the seller changes your need and you know about the articles and they tell you the price. Thus you should be expert in bargaining. Also there is another trick. Spot the article you wish to buy, without showing any enthusiasm about it, casually ask its price and create an aura as if you are making a favour to the shopkeeper by purchasing the articles and start the negotiations.

## YAJNAKARMA (EATING OUT)

Let us talk about biting into Mumbai. From the numerous culinary diversities of Desi food to a cornucopia of the Chinese, Continental, Italian, Thai and Mexican, French, Lebanese, American and you can have the whole world here in a single city! Mumbai is global in eating habits too! Tasting Mumbai's staple food can be just another way to understand the city's psychology.

Right from mobile Bhelpuriwala, small counters of Pav Bhaji, Puri Bhaji, Vada Paav, Tikkis, Pani Puri, Kulfi, Coconuts, small eateries of Maharashtrian, Gujarati and Punjabi as well as South Indian food, kiosks, graded restaurants up to two to five star hotels, their special restaurants and dining halls, Mumbai's eating culture is truly cosmopolitan and acts like the *Draupadi's Thali* which provides food to millions at one go!

For authentic Indian food in a traditional environment the choices range from the Kandahar of the Oberoi at Nariman point, Jewel of India at Nehru Centre in Worli (those interested in exotic cocktails have a bar here), Tanjore of the Taj Mahal Hotel on Apollo Bunder, for kebabs and crisp naans and chhole (gram), there is Copper Chimney at three places viz. Dr. Annie Besant Road, Worli, Kala Ghoda

and JVPD scheme at Juhu (the owners of this restaurant also eat here) and Bombay Brasserie in Worli itself. Pure vegetarians can have their say with a *thali* (a lavish spread of a variety of Indian foods) at Chetana at Kala Ghoda, for *Gujarati thali* there is Rajdhani near Crawford Market, reasonably priced vegetarian south Indian meal on a banana leaf or *thali* at Rama Nayak near Matunga railway station. Wannabe artists converge with the established ones at Samovar for lively 'intellectual' conversation over a beer or a mid-afternoon snack. Interesting tea and *kulfi* can be had to end the meals here, which is near Jehangir Art Gallery at Kala Ghoda. Those interested in seafood but don't want it to be fishy, there are number of outlets. Trishna at Kala Ghoda, Mahesh Lunch Home on Cawasji Patel Street, only Fish with distinct Bengali flavour of *doi 'machch'* and *shorse bata machch* is in Hotel Rosewood at Tardeo.

Ever heard of Salad Bars? Then come and see for yourself how a salad buffet for lunch and lavish exotic dinner spread makes Palms an evergreen favourite at The Oberoi Hotel at Nariman point. Or you may go to the Golden Gate (Saladero) on Madame Cama Road. Coconut based dishes and spicy Thai noodles are most popular at Thai Ban on Tumer Road at Bandra. Not just Jazz By the Bay is a Jazz Bar on Marine Drive where one can have salad buffet at lunchtime and the '*a la carte faire*' for dinner are equally popular. There is also live music on certain days. For Italian food lovers with a special nose for *pastas* in a variety of colourful sauces you can enter in Lido at Churchgate or Revival on Marine Drive. The Chinese food is available at number of places all over Mumbai. One can have grilled tiger prawns and spare ribs with honey, the shark-fin and crab meat soup, steamed noodles with lemon grass, 'tum yum' soup, baby corn pattaya, corn cream and the chili garlic noodles, steamed 'dim sums' and the chicken in red chilly at Ming palace on Colaba Causeway, China Garden at

Kemps Corner, Sailor's Bar and Restaurant on Pherozshah Mehta road, Golden Dragon at Apollo Bunder and Ling's Pavilion at the same place. Accommodation is absolutely no problem for a visitor notwithstanding the time of his arrival in the city. What's more, there is all class of hotels from five stars to homely lodges. You don't have to be a Mumbaikar to be a Mumbaikar!

People can have pizza and other Fast Food from such outlets as Domino's in Prabhadevi or the Pizzeria on Marine Drive and Croissant etc. at Churchgate and Birdy's by Taj at Cuffe Parade. The climate of Mumbai will not tire you but will certainly make you hungry. So get hungry and get the stomach full!

The two main partners in *Vada-Pav* viz. the *vada* and the *bread* are ably turned as 'made for each other'. '*Vada-Paav*' is an easily available and easily eatable staple food of Mumbai. Middle classes and the sundry especially those who call footpath as their home and heavy workers seek it after. '*Vada-Paav*' can be purchased while passing by. *Paav-bhaji* and *Missal* (a spiced preparation of sprouted beans) also come in handy for all Mumbaikars on the move. All these culinary rituals related with '*Paav*' come to a standstill if the bakers strike the production of *Aatta* and *Maida* (and they do if the government increases sales tax on these two items) then the regular beneficiaries are left with no option but to eat *vada*, *bhaaji* and *missal* without *paav*. It is certainly more admiring than the strike of BEST workers when lakhs of Mumbaikars cannot reach their destinations as the buses remain off the roads.

## ALL ROADS LEAD TO MUMBAI

Mumbai is not just the capital of Maharashtra, it is one of the leading progressive states in India. If one has to take into account the progress made by our country in a particular field, it will be incomplete without the mention of Maharashtra and Mumbai too! Maharashtra is divided into four geographical zones viz., the Western Maharashtra, Konkan, Marathawada and Vidarbha. Respective statutory boards look after the economic development of these regions. It is the land of *Ajantha* and *Ellora*, of world famous *Alphonso* mangoes, of *Sahyadri* range of mountains, of co-operative sugar factories and milk of numerous forests in Vidarbha and of Chhatrapati Shivaji and his number of forts. It is the birthplace of Lokmanya Tilak, V.D.Sawarkar and many others. Though majority of the people speak Marathi, the accent varies from region to region with each of them finding a respected place in the culture and literature.

Mumbai is well connected by road, rail and air to all the major cities in the state, in the country and by air to number of foreign countries as well. The Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) plies regular buses to Mumbai from almost all the major cities in the state and to major cities of the adjoining states. The buses coming to Mumbai arrive at Mumbai Central, Parel and Kurla depots. Out of them Mumbai Central S.T. station is most convenient to all travelers. These three depots send 350 buses daily to other parts of the state while more than 400 buses arrive here. Excluding the festival seasons and vacation periods almost 25,000 passengers arrive in Mumbai daily.

The Konkan Railway has provided a bonanza for the discerning railway passengers to explore the beauty of this otherwise untouched treasure of sea, coconut trees, mangoes,

sea food, cashew nuts and so on. Also this railway has facilitated easy access to South India. Thousands of *Konkanis* are employed in Mumbai as they have very limited resources back home. Naturally during the festivals like, *Ganeshotsav*, *Deepawali* and *Coconut Day* they throng all the ways leading towards Konkan. There are number of trains starting from CST, Dadar and Lokmanya Tilak Railway station at Kurla to Konkan region and further down South.

A visitor is helped to have Mumbai Darshan and of adjoining places by conducted tours of Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) having office at CDO Hutmants on Madame Cama Road. One can have information regarding all facilities for sightseeing and accommodation at various places in and around Mumbai as well as at other places in the state. They conduct city tours (one each in the morning and evening) and a Suburban tour for full day except Monday. The Government of India Tourist Office located in the Western Railway Headquarters building provides similar type of tours and other facilities, which is just opposite the Churchgate railway station. Both these railways operate long distance trains to every nook and corner of our country and a visitor can make to and fro reservations from any of the counters. Also there are number of approved private tourist transport operators. To visit the Elephanta caves there are launches at every hour from Gateway of India.

Tourist information centers of various states are also here. At World Trade Centre one can get information about Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh tourism. Reservations for Indian Airlines and Air India can be done at Air India Building at Nariman Point and through counters at Taj Mahal and Centaur hotel and at the airport. Central Railway's domestic and inter-states reservations are available from CST station at Bori

Bunder and Western Railways from the reservation office at Churchgate. While the Mumbai Central bus station houses the reservation center for all S.T. buses. There are number of offices of the International airlines like Aeroflot-Russian airlines, Air France, Air Lanka Ltd., Air Mauritius, Emirates, Japan Airlines, Kenya Airways, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Korean Air and so on. These offices are located mostly in the vicinity of Nariman Point, Churchgate and Apollo Bunder. The names and addresses of travel agents and tour operators approved by the Department of Tourism can be had from its office near Churchgate.

## FUTURE OF MUMBAI

The Dharavi area in Mumbai is regarded as the biggest cluster of slums in Asia. It was also considered as a curse on whole of Mumbai. But today, this nomenclature has taken a back seat as the whole of Mumbai has fallen in line with Dharavi. The pride of Mumbai being regarded as the economic capital of India has been overshadowed by its fast changing identity as the city with the largest slums in the world. As the city is well-known as abode of livelihood and the notion that nobody goes hungry in this city it attracts people in search of job from not only Maharashtra but also from all over the country. The terrible famine of 1972-73 forced hordes of villagers to take the road to Mumbai. Some of them got jobs in cloth mills, others turned to sundry businesses and they permanently settled in the slums. In less than 10 years the cloth mills were shut down one by one and many mill workers again shifted to their villages. Rest of the workers are living in fear that those lands on which their *chawls* are situated will be sold to land mafias. On one hand the Marathi people were bidding adieu to this city, on

the other hand people from other states were flooding to this city. They also raised slums on government land and that too, without spending a penny. The news spread in no time and gradually the city was engulfed in the sea of slums. Thus slum-dwellers formed unions giving birth to slumlords who wielded unauthorized power and money. Today, in 2001, the population of Mumbai stands at a whopping 1 crore 25 lakh (excluding the floating population from neighbouring Thane and Pune districts). Out of them 40 to 45 lakh people live in slums. That is, almost half of the population of Mumbai is in the shape of slums. Now it is simply impossible to manage these slums. Any effort in this direction is like the tears of a crocodile.

The number of people who do not regard Marathi as the official language is on the increase and with that its future is becoming darker. In the day-to-day business Marathi language has been relegated to third position after English and Hindi.

The traffic problem is always turning a red signal in the city. Numbers of over-bridges have been built at strategic locations in the city and some suburbs have really helped in decongestion of the traffic. But it is also giving rise to a 'over bridge cult'. The Konkan Railway has put forth a proposal of Sky Bus Metro system and accordingly three routes viz, Andheri to Ghatkopar, Andheri to Charkop and Kurla to Bandra are proposed under this project. Mumbai receives 2200 millimetres of rainfall every year. The water thus clogging the roads and railway tracks throws the normal life out of gear. The underground water pipes, telephone cables, drainages and other equipments (some reaching up to 100 feet in depth) do not provide a suitable ground for an underground railway system. Hence the 'Sky Bus Metro' proposal is gaining support from experts in the field.

The total length of roads in Mumbai is 1808 kilometers. Out of them 572 kilometers are spread in the main city while 1236 kilometers are in the suburbs. Approximately 300 kilometers of roads have been concretized but some of them have developed cracks. As far as pollution is concerned Mumbaikars are choking themselves with increasing numbers of vehicles plying on the roads. But Smoke Affected Residents of Chembur and Bombay Environment Action Group took up the cause to the court. Ultimately all 15-years-old heavy vehicles and 10-years-old light vehicles are to be taken off the road by the end of 2002.

Roads in the commercial areas of Mumbai are fully packed with vehicles throughout the day. The so-called footpaths (if any) are occupied by the famous ferriwalas (hawkers). No wonder then that an average Mumbaikar has to wield his way through this maze. Festive seasons add more frenzy to this situation. Children, physically challenged and old people become easy victims of this chaos. Dadar is a case in point. A half an hour's walk through the lanes of bazaars here boggles one's mind. The hawkers have been provided with a six storey high Hawkers Plaza. But they are not ready to move in there as they fear that the customers may not venture in the building and the places on roads will still be captured by other hawkers. BMC periodically takes action against these hawkers by confiscating their pushcarts along with the goods. But it is like throwing some water out of the sea with a spoon. The situation remains the same.

Mumbaikars returning home late in the night might do not fear the underworld dons but they are certainly afraid of around 4 lakh stray dogs in the streets. In 1998, more than 70 thousand persons had a taste of bites from these dogs. The magnitude of this problem is so big that it had been raised in the BMC and the state legislature.

The number of unauthorised religious places are increasing in Mumbai with the increasing population of various religions. Official figure goes up to such 827 structures. It becomes dangerous to deal with them, as some of them are very old. Earlier they were outside the city limits but today stand right in the middle due to its increased habitat. They also pose hazard for vehicular traffic. But the religious angle blocks the powers of the authorities to take any action against them. This nerve surely misses the sensitive beats of this rigid city.

Mumbaikars are certainly worried about their future along with the city and it seems all measures to overcome their miseries have exhausted. But still there is one person (or a breed of them) who can cure any ailment under the sun. His code name is '*Bengali Baba*'. Spread from Fort to Dombivili and Virar they are busy throughout the day in relieving the ordinary people of their economic and mental agonies. One can easily come across advertisements of these '*Babas*' in the local trains, claiming to fulfill any wish regarding monetary profit, job, foreign trip, partner, wife and witchcraft etc. When the 'patient' undertakes the treatment of the 'Baba' by paying a sum his or hers real '*peeds (agony)*' begins. Ultimately it is the Baba who is benefited the most from this treatment. It seems that superstition has been allotted some time in the otherwise tight schedule of an average Mumbaikar.

In spite of all these oddities Mumbaikars love their city. And there was a man who helped them in this endeavour for more than 25 years through his daily newspaper columns viz., 'Round and About' and 'Eating Out'. His name was Behram Contractor alias *Busy Bee*. He used to wander alone at Nariman Point or on Girgaum Chowpatty, observe the animals in Jijamata Udyana, freak-out eating Chanas at Horniman Circle or mutely witness the turnover of

crores of rupees taking place on Dalal Street. His pen equally respected the changes in the Mumbai's life, agonies of the railway commuters, dwindling chawls and dirty slums. After the 1993 Mumbai riots he wrote that 'all will be well in few days but I will not meet my daily bakeriwala any more'. *Busy Bee* did not belong to Mumbai. Still he was a true Mumbaikar, because he believed that the future of Mumbai is certainly not bleak. It is bright. It depends on how you look at it!

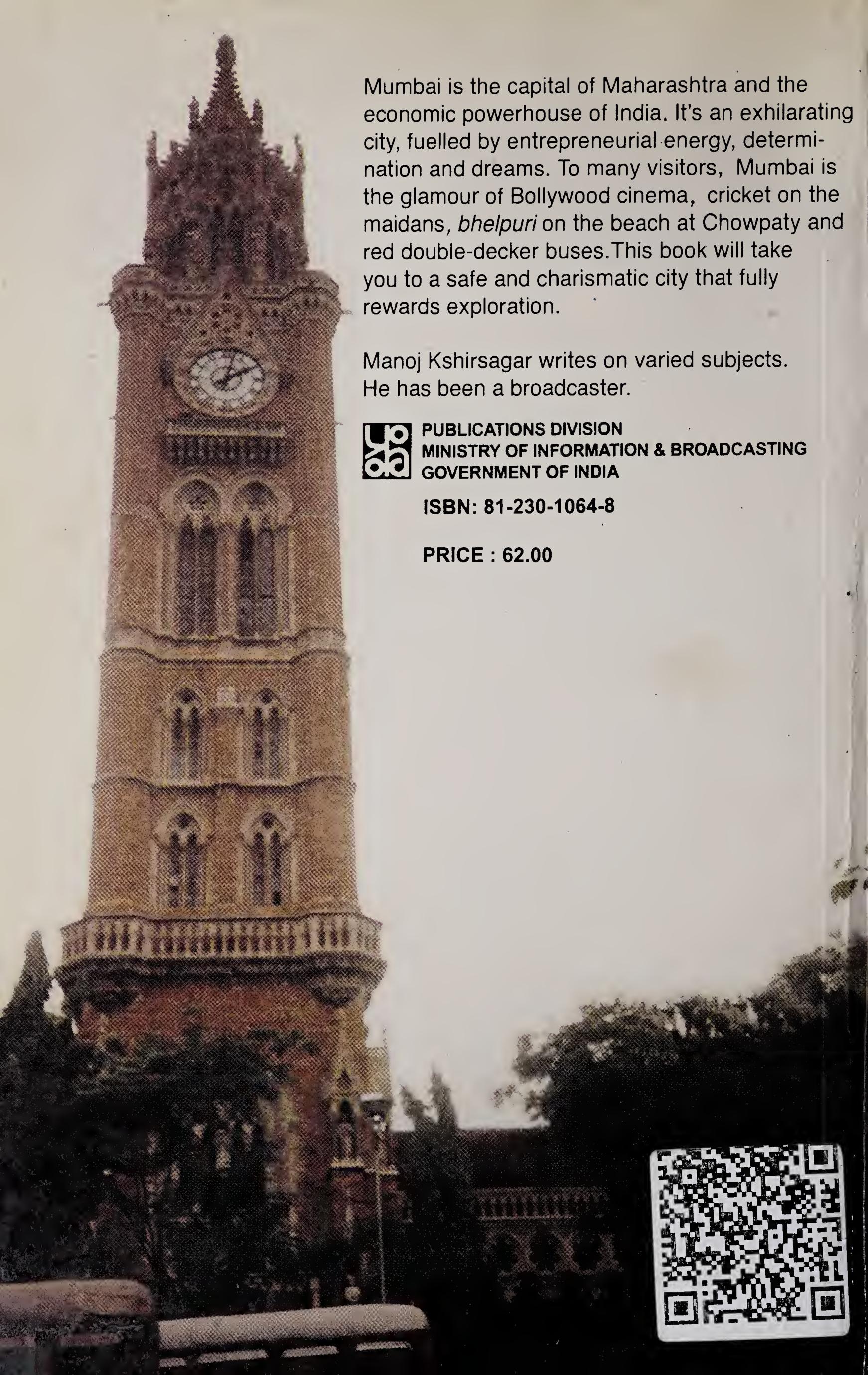
So, make a promise to yourself and your family to visit this city of dreams and see one for yourself! See how the dreams are seen and brought into reality. Be a Mumbaikar. At least for a while!











Mumbai is the capital of Maharashtra and the economic powerhouse of India. It's an exhilarating city, fuelled by entrepreneurial energy, determination and dreams. To many visitors, Mumbai is the glamour of Bollywood cinema, cricket on the maidans, *bhelpuri* on the beach at Chowpaty and red double-decker buses. This book will take you to a safe and charismatic city that fully rewards exploration.

Manoj Kshirsagar writes on varied subjects.  
He has been a broadcaster.



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